



The KiVa Parent Guide

GUIDE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENTS



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Let's make a safe school together!

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**Let's make a safe
school together!**

Introduction



Dear parent and/or guardian,

This parent guide is intended for parents whose child(ren)'s school has chosen KiVa. KiVa is a programme for social safety and tackling bullying in primary schools. The school is committed to ensuring a pleasant school experience for everyone.

In this parent guide, we will tell you exactly what KiVa entails and how the programme works. In addition, the difference between bullying and teasing is explained, and we tell you what you can do at home if your child is bullying others or being bullied. In this way, we hope to give you a clear picture of KiVa.

In addition to learning arithmetic, writing and language, it is important that children develop on a social and emotional level at school. This means that they learn how to deal with their feelings in different situations, as well as with other people. Within KiVa, the emphasis is therefore on the strength of the group. Children learn how to prevent and solve problems as a group.

As a parent and/or guardian, you play an important role in your child's development. Together with you, the school ensures a safe and pleasant environment in which your child can grow. If we work together, every child can enjoy a pleasant time at school. For effective collaboration, it is important to have a clear understanding of the principles and components of the KiVa programme.

If you have any questions and/or comments about KiVa as a result of this guide, please do not hesitate to contact us using the contact details below.

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What is KiVa?

KiVa = Nice/fun

Kiusaamista Vastustava = against bullying

About KiVa

KiVa is a programme for ages 4 to 12 aimed at creating a positive and safe class environment. In addition, extra attention is paid to tackling bullying. The programme focuses on positive classroom dynamics, ensuring that every child can look forward to going to school. More information about the individual components of the programme can be found via this link:



At KiVa, we believe that every child has the right to a pleasant time at school. We work closely with scientists, educational supervisors, primary schools and teachers.

Scientifically proven

KiVa was originally developed at the University of Turku in Finland and has been scientifically proven to be effective. It is the only programme whose effectiveness has been demonstrated on an international level. Because KiVa has a strong link to the scientific community, the programme continues to evolve and develop. Additionally, KiVa was re-assessed in 2022 by the Evaluation Committee of the Netherlands Youth Institute (NJI), where it received the highest rating for effectiveness.



More than an anti-bullying programme

KiVa has been proven effective against bullying, and it also contributes to a safer school environment and improved well-being for children. This is partly because topics such as emotions, peer pressure and communication are covered. KiVa therefore also serves as a school-wide programme for social and emotional development. KiVa has a positive approach and promotes positive group formation. KiVa rules are always formulated in a positive manner.

The central principles of KiVa

1. We share responsibility

At KiVa, we believe in the strength of the group. When coming up with good ideas, organising fun activities and solving/preventing problems within the group, the emphasis is placed on the responsibility all children have for the group's well-being. Everyone is (co-)responsible for the atmosphere in the group. Although not everyone is responsible for the emergence of a problem, everyone can contribute to working towards a solution. The strength of the group is used to bring about behavioural change. This aligns with the role theory approach. Through KiVa, children learn strategies they can use to solve problems within the group and, more importantly, to prevent them. The starting point is that everyone (teachers, students and parents) has strengths that can contribute to a positive atmosphere. In short, we share responsibility for fostering a harmonious group.



2. We look ahead

At KiVa, we think in terms of possibilities rather than limitations. Not everything has to go right the first time. It's about how various (unpleasant) situations are handled. Looking ahead. Therefore, within KiVa, we are not focused on assigning blame, but instead, children are given the responsibility to help contribute to the solution.



3. Everyone belongs

Everyone is welcome. At KiVa, we don't judge anyone. Teachers engage in conversations with children and can address them if necessary. However, this is always done based on behaviour. Children are never judged for who they are. Together, the students form a group. In addition to students, this also includes teachers and parents. Within KiVa, we strive to regularly coordinate between teachers, parents and students. That is why information about KiVa is available, for example, via a parents' evening, or an explanation about KiVa in the newsletter for parents.

4. The group is central

A key element of the KiVa programme is that everything starts with the group. This means that teachers guide rather than dictate, encouraging children to think independently and collaborate with others. This gives children the freedom to think critically and independently, while also taking responsibility. This increases the chance that children become intrinsically motivated to form a harmonious group together.

¹ This theory originally comes from a scientific article written by Christina Salmivalli, from 1996. Since then, it's been validated by many researchers all over the world. You can find information about the article in the list of sources.

5. Tackling bullying effectively

The KiVa programme is a curriculum that works preventively against bullying. The KiVa programme explicitly and systematically focuses on bullying.

We want to give children:

- > insight into the social processes that play a role when bullying occurs in class;
- > skills to deal with bullying before they have to apply them in practice;
- > more confidence in the attitude they have towards bullying.

When KiVa becomes an integral part of the school culture, bullying significantly decreases. If bullying does occur, children and adults know what to do. The KiVa manual at school also includes specific measures that can be implemented if there are actual (bullying) problems.

Talking about bullying is also important in classes where bullying is not taking place. By explicitly discussing group norms in general and those regarding bullying, children are prepared and able to act if unpleasant situations arise in the classroom.

The teacher plays an essential role in all the pillars. Providing an example of the desired behaviour helps create a positive atmosphere within the group and prevent bullying².

² This stems from two scientific studies. You can find these in the list of sources at the end of the parent guide.

Why KiVa?

With KiVa, the school is committed to creating a positive and pleasant atmosphere. The norm at school is that you treat each other in a friendly and respectful way. If negative behaviour, such as bullying, occurs, action is taken to improve the situation. Schools have resources available from KiVa's various materials to support this. Since KiVa has been scientifically proven to work effectively at Dutch schools, it is an excellent method for creating a positive social environment at school. Additionally, KiVa continuously develops based on laws and regulations, the needs and wishes of schools and new scientific insights.

In the next section, you can read more about KiVa's teaching materials.



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KiVa at school

Let's make a safe

school together!

Teaching materials and the 10 topics

The teachers at your child's school work with KiVa manuals. These manuals consist of 10 topics that are covered in the group throughout the school year. In practice, this means about one topic per month. Within these ten topics, goals are central. For each topic, there are activities and fun assignments with which the goals can be achieved. Within KiVa, there is room for the teacher's own professional input.

They can also come up with fun activities or exercises themselves that achieve the same goals. This approach allows everyone to work from their own strengths!

Schools in the Netherlands can also use the supplementary The Peacock Rik lesson package is available for students ages 4 to 6. The idea behind this is that children gain social skills through playful activities and develop emotional awareness.



10 topics

age 4-8

Who are we?

What does a pleasant group look like?

Feelings

What does a pleasant group look like?

What is a harmonious group?

What does a pleasant group look like?

Everyone is unique

What does a pleasant group look like?

Teasing, arguing or bullying?

How does bullying work

Roles in the group

How does bullying work

Together, we are a harmonious group

Together we are a pleasant group!

We help each other

Together we are a pleasant group!

What can I do?

Together we are a pleasant group!

KiVa – Together, we can do it

Together we are a pleasant group!

age 9-12

Everyone deserves respect

What does a pleasant group look like?

In the group

What does a pleasant group look like?

What is communication?

What does a pleasant group look like?

Teasing, arguing or bullying?

How does bullying work?

Hidden forms of bullying

How does bullying work

Roles in the group

How does bullying work

Together, we are a harmonious group

Together we are a pleasant group!

We help each other

Together we are a pleasant group!

What can I do?

Together we are a pleasant group!

KiVa – Together, we can do it

Together we are a pleasant group!

Student Monitor

The student monitor is a digital questionnaire for students. The student monitor is used to map out social safety, well-being and (friendship) relationships within the group. The results provide clear insights to improve the atmosphere in the group. The school can also use the student monitor to meet the social safety duty of care required by the Education Inspectorate.

KiVa certificate

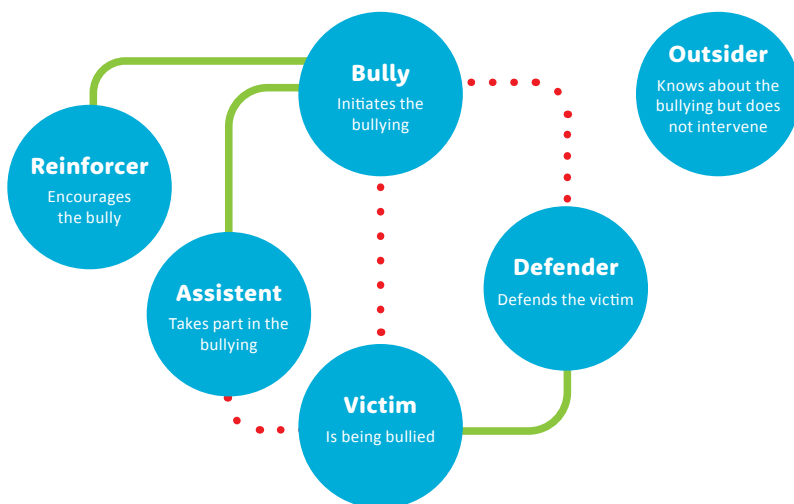
If your child(ren)'s school has been working with KiVa for two years or more, they can apply for the KiVa certificate. The school receives the certificate when they demonstrably meet the certification requirements. A certification interview is held with the school in which the requirements are discussed and in-depth questions are asked.



Support group approach

A school can use the support group approach when there is an unpleasant atmosphere or bullying behaviour in a group. The support group can also be used for someone who is not feeling good. This aligns with the central principles: everyone belongs. During a support group approach, different children are asked to think about how they can resolve the unpleasant situation in the classroom.





Important to know: bullying often involves several children, and everyone plays a role in the bullying behaviour. In the image below, you can see an illustration and the relationship of all the children involved:

- > Green line, positive interaction
- > Red dotted line, negative interaction

It is worth realising that a child is not a bully, but exhibits bullying behaviour. The child takes on the role of the bully in the situation.

All children may be asked to join a support group. Especially outsiders. When your child participates in a support group, this does not mean that your child is the cause of a problem. This aligns with the central principle: we share responsibility.

If your child is involved in the cause of a problem, the support group should focus on looking forward together towards a solution. The focus is not on finding answers to the question of who is to blame. This aligns with the central principle: looking ahead.

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KiVa at home

Have a chat with your child using the questions on the next page. **Tip:** cut them out and stick them on the fridge!

KiVa language for home

When conversations are held, KiVa has a number of conversation rules. These rules can also be useful reminders at home:



ONE AT A TIME

One person talks at a time;



"I" STATEMENTS

You describe what something is like for you. This is in contrast to "you" language. For example: "I get the feeling that you're not listening to me", instead of: "You're not listening!"



POSITIVE LANGUAGE

Say what you do want, turning your complaint into a wish.

For example: "I would like it if..."



RESPECT

Of course, we must treat each other with respect.

If you want to have a conversation with your child about school, the following questions are both fun and good to ask.

- > What do you hope will be the same tomorrow as it was today?
- > What do you hope will go better tomorrow than today?
- > Who did you play with? And what did you do?
- > What was the best/worst thing you experienced today?
- > Who did you help today? And who helped you?
- > If you could do today again, what would you do differently?
- > What was funny at school that made you laugh?
- > What's the coolest or nicest place at school?
- > If you could be the teacher tomorrow, what would you do?
- > Wat was er grappig op school waarom je moest lachen?
- > Who would you like to play with if you could choose from all the children you've never played with before?
- > What did you share in the circle discussion today? Or what would you have liked to share in the circle discussion?
- > What would you like to do more often or learn at school?
- > If you could take something home from school, what would you choose?
- > Are you sitting in a nice spot in class, or would you like to swap places with someone? If so, where would you like to sit?
- > Has anyone made you feel scared/happy/angry/sad today? What happened?
- > Who in class could you be nicer to? How would you go about it?
- > What nice things would the teacher say about you if I talked to them?
- > Which school rule do you find difficult to follow?
- > What did you do at school that you can be proud of?



**Let's make a safe
school together!**



Is your child involved in bullying?

Do you feel that your child is exhibiting bullying behaviour or is being bullied? Then engage in conversation with your child. Remember the principles of KiVa:

1. We share responsibility

Everyone can contribute to making the classroom a better place.

- Is your child being bullied? Then this is not their fault. Your child is not alone. In addition to yourself, the school, the teacher and classmates are also there for your child.
- Is your child (also) bullying others? That behaviour doesn't align with the responsibility the child has towards the group. We are also there for children who bully. What is behind this behaviour? What is your child trying to achieve? How could things be different?

2. We look ahead

A bullying situation is never nice. What was the intention of certain behaviour? How would we like to interact with each other? How can we achieve this? What can the child do about it themselves? Who else could help?

3. Everyone belongs

There's never a good reason to bully someone. Everyone is allowed to be who they are. When you are very different from each other, things can sometimes be difficult. Any problems that arise from this should definitely be discussed. At the same time, differences are beautiful! Take time to focus on that as well.

4. The group is central

In the case of bullying, we want it to stop. However, this does not mean that control should be taken completely out of the hands of those involved. Give your child the freedom to think critically and independently about the situation. What level of responsibility is your child able to take on? What do they need help with?





5. We want bullying to stop

Bullying isn't fun for anyone. We have agreed together that we do not want bullying at school. The bullying has to stop. That's why you can work together with the school to see how the situation can be improved.

In addition to a conversation at home, you can also have a conversation with the KiVa team at school. They know how situations are handled through KiVa and can help you and your child.



Resource list

This parent guide refers to a number of scientific studies. These are listed below.

Title "Bullying as a group process: Participant roles and their relations to social status within the group".

Researchers Christina Salmivalli, Kirsti Lagerspetz, Kaj Björkqvist, Karin Österman, Ari Kaukiainen

Year of publication 1996

Title "The role of teachers in bullying: The relation between antibullying attitudes, efficacy, and efforts to reduce bullying."

Researchers René Veenstra, Siegwart Lindenberg, Gijs Huitsing, Miia Sainio, Christina Salmivalli

Year of publication 2014

Title: "Classroom- and School-Level Contributions to Bullying and Victimization: A Review."

Principal researcher Silja Saarento, Claire F Garandeau, Christina Salmivalli

Year of publication 2015

If you have any questions about the above resources, please contact us.



Parent Evening

Did you know that KiVa also offers parent evenings? We can help organize a parent evening at your child's school together with the school's KiVa trainer.

If you, as a parent, would like a parent evening, please contact your child's teacher or the school principal.



Got questions about KiVa?
Get in touch with us through:



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