

OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN
OF REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA



OMBUDSMAN ZA DJECU
REPUBLIKE SRPSKE

Number: 1458/11

SPECIAL REPORT

- ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AT YOUR SCHOOL -

Banja Luka, 12.10.2010.

Bana Milosavljevića 8
78000 Banja Luka, Republic of Srpska, B&H
Phone: (+387 51) 222 420, 221 990, Fax: (+387 51) 213 332
E-mail: info@djeca.rs.ba, www.djeca.rs.ba

Bana Milosavljevića 8
78000 Banja Luka, Republika Srpska, BiH
Tel: (+387 51) 222 420, 221 990, Fax: (+387 51) 213 332
E-mail: info@djeca.rs.ba, www.djeca.rs.ba

I INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the powers stipulated by the Law on Ombudsman for Children¹ the Institution has, in addition to cooperation with schools on individual cases and by invitation of schools to cooperate in their activities, organized visits to schools, especially secondary schools, with an expectation that when talking to high school students it will get information that may be grounds for action of the Ombudsman for Children.

The Law on Ombudsman for Children stipulates²:

The Ombudsman for Children introduces children to the manner of exercising and protecting their rights and interest and advises them how to exercise and protect their rights and interests.

The Ombudsman for Children is continually cooperating with children, encouraging them to express their opinions, initiates public activities aimed at improving the status of children and participates in these activities, and proposes measures to increase the impact of the child in society.

Under the name "About your rights in your school", school visits were performed by employees of the Ombudsman for Children in Banja Luka and offices in Doboj and Foča.

Workshops were conducted in 27 schools, of which 25 secondary and two elementary, in 21 municipalities, so that education covers children from all parts of Republic of Srpska.

Schools in which the workshops were conducted are

- High School, Prnjavor
- High School, Mrkonjić Grad
- High School and Vocational High School, Istočna Ilidža
- Medical High School, Banja Luka
- High School "Ivo Andrić," Višegrad
- High School "28. juni", Istočno Novo Sarajevo
- Administrative, Catering and Apprentices School, Doboj
- Elementary School "Veselin Masleša", Foča
- Civil Engineering School, Banja Luka
- High School, Derventa
- High School Centre "Petar Slijepčević" Gacko
- High School Centre "Nikola Tesla", Kotor Varoš

¹ Law on Ombudsman for Children, "Official Gazette RS", No. 103/08

² Law on Ombudsman for Children, Article 6.

- High School "Filip Višnjić", Bijeljina
- High School Centre "Milorad Vlačić" Vlasenica
- High School, Banja Luka
- High school "Petar Kočić", Zvornik
- High School Centre "Golub Kureš" Bileća
- High School "Čelinac" Čelinac
- High School "Jovan Dučić", Doboj,
- High School "Jovan Dučić", Trebinje,
- High School, Gradiška
- Economic and Trade School, Doboj
- High School Centre, Čajniče
- Catering-Trade-Turistic School, Banja Luka
- Combined High School "Jovan Dučić", Teslić
- High School Centre, Trebinje
- Elementary School "Vojislav Ilić," Krupa na Vrbasu

The workshops were held in September, October and November 2010.

The school visits were realized in the following manner:

1. Conversation with director of school, pedagogue/psychologist/social worker

This conversation had a goal:

- Introduction of school administration with the Institution and its jurisdictions
- Review of the state of school regarding several topics:
 - achievement in learning and behavior,
 - cooperation with parents
 - functioning of Students' Councils,
- conditions for teaching (state of school building, classrooms, school equipment, gymnasium, outdoor sports fields, number of students, students travelers ...),
- cooperation with local community and NGOs,
- extracurricular activities
- special achievements or school problems.

2. Workshop with Student's Council

Goal:

Educating children about their rights guaranteed to them by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and forming of the Network of Young Advisors of the Ombudsman for Children.

Since it is not possible to address all rights at the first meeting, children were offered that the themes of workshop are the following rights, which they have accepted:

PARENTAL CARE AND FAMILY LIFE (Article 5, Article 9, Article 10, Article 20.), EDUCATION (Article 28, Article 29.), LEISURE TIME (Article 31.), FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION (Article 13, Article 12.), HEALTH PROTECTION (Article 24.), PROTECTION FROM ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION (Article 19.), KNOWING THE RIGHTS OF A CHILD (Article 42.).

Methods and phases of work:

1. Introductory part: the presentation of workshop leader, highlighting the objectives of the workshop and presentation on powers, responsibilities and current activities of the Institution.
2. Content: Working in groups formed by random selection of its members so that each group deals with one right with questions that should stimulate children to mutually exchange experiences and knowledge about their rights, starting from an assumption that not everyone has the same level of knowledge and experience based on which they can speak.
3. In the evaluation children exhibit their knowledge about rights and their responses are compared with appropriate articles of the UN Convention with a presentation.
4. Time for questions and additional discussion

Workshops lasted 90 minutes, usually in time between two school shifts and therefore they did not affect the regular school process.

Workshops are planned primarily for students, members of Students' Councils so that they, as chosen representatives of their classes could propagate the acquired knowledge in their classes.

II ANALYSIS OF RESULTS BY RIGHTS

By summing up the results on conducted activities, for the purposes of this report, those reactions and thoughts of children are singled out, for which, according to the Ombudsman for Children, is necessary to take additional measures to overcome the current situation. There are differences from school to school, on the same issues and problems children have different experiences, but on many issues that they face with every day, they think the same. The development of local community and the opportunities that it provides has a great importance on students and their views on the stated issues, as well as on the activities they are engaged in or wish to be engaged in, in their schools.

The right to education

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child³ stipulates that Member States recognizing the right of the child to education accept the obligation that education of the child be directed on the development of personality of the child and development of his abilities to the limit.

School managements generally tried to present their schools in the best light, given the time and circumstances in which we live. They think that because of this, they manage to achieve satisfactory results, or in given circumstances the best possible, and are trying to provide students with the best possible conditions for staying and learning in school.

Regardless of the position of school managements, not even in one school children stated that they are fully satisfied with the manner of exercising their right to express their own opinions and how and in what manner their ideas that come to the relevant are conducted. Students very openly and honestly talked about numerous issues and problems, often stating that when they say it to someone at school that they are not taken seriously. One of the issues about which the children expressed the need to talk and asked for a response to numerous questions in this regard is PASSING OF THE ENTRANCE EXAM for enrollment in high school.

Students point out that in this way the selection would be made in terms of knowledge and skills that are required for certain professions.

High school students consider that precisely on the enrollment to high school their right to education which is consistent with their needs and abilities is violated. They state that real knowledge from primary school often does not match the grades, so that A grade students, without

³ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 28. and 29.

real knowledge and work habits enroll in schools that later they can not finish, at the same time, children who are realistically graded, and whose grades match their knowledge, remain not enrolled, or are under the line of allowed number for enrollment.

EVALUATION is one of the problems that students cited in one number of schools. Popular belief is that children react only when they get a bad grade. However, students from these schools did not speak about bad grades, but about the manner the grade is given. They especially emphasized the present problem of writing grades without public disclosure, the grade is given without any explanation from which the students could understand why they knowledge is graded in such manner. They point out that for the same knowledge two students get different grades with an explanation that has nothing to do with the given grade. In some schools, children said that they have already reacted to such an attitude of a teacher, that the director was called to class, and later a supervisor, but that did not solve present problem.

In one high school, according to the director, there are no more instruction classes in mathematics, because in the first grade the level of knowledge is recorded and teacher, in accordance with the Law, adjusts the manner of work to capabilities of students.

In that school, according to the director, there are no objections to grades because it is required from teachers to work by modern methods and students, at the beginning of the year, are familiarized with the code of conduct and their attention is drawn to their obligations, as well as the criteria that were set. During the workshop students have confirmed that the teachers try to convey their knowledge and that especially younger use modern methods and teaching aids. This school is one of the few that is very well equipped and has a management which has for students and teachers that is for all the employees prescribed clear rules to which all adhere to, and results are visible at first glance.

One issue people are reluctant to speak about is the problem of UNEXCUSED absences in many schools, and that is usually not solved in a way to get to the cause of why children are absent from school in some classes, at some teachers'. The problem is usually "solved" by the imposition of educational - disciplinary measures in accordance with the Law on Secondary Education. However, with that, the problem is still not solved, the cause is unknown and it was not acted on the reasons that have lead to it.

Several schools have conducted the research on unexcused absences and kept track of unexcused absences. In some schools Students' Councils and Parents' Councils have dealt with the issue, but there were no results in terms of significant reduction of the number of absences. During the workshops we have tried to get an answer from the students on the question why are they skipping classes? The response was mainly that some classes are boring or they want to avoid a bad grade, but also that it is irresponsible and self-willed behavior of individual

students. Unexcused absences are equally present in urban and rural areas, as well as in general education schools and secondary vocational schools.

In most schools students did not complain about school discipline and code of conduct, but they have noted that in some schools they apply only to students, not to teachers.

In on elementary school Code of Conduct is in every classroom, which is a good way to get all reminded on daily basis of the prescribed rules, and more importantly is that these rules apply equally to all at the school: students, teachers, directors and all employees of the school.

The right to parental care

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates the primary responsibility and accountability of parents for development and growth of their children. In this regard, one of the topics that we discussed is the cooperation between parents and schools.

The Law on Secondary Education in Article 55. establishes the obligation of parents to continually work with school and monitor their child's work. Unfortunately, in all schools it was confirmed that only a small number of parents show interest in cooperation with school, one number of parents only when a child has a problem related to learning or behavior and that problem again is not perceived in its entirety in order to eliminate the cause of such behavior, but only a consequence, by trying to prevent at all costs the imposition of educational - disciplinary measure or bad grade. Unfortunately, some parents do not show interest in cooperation even after several calls and warnings from the school.

The largest number of parents only occasionally, mainly at parents' meetings or information make contact with the school.

Parents' Council

By the Law on Secondary Education⁴, parents have the right, and each school obligation to assist parents in the formation of Parents' Council, which is an advisory body established with the primary aim of exercising a successful and meaningful cooperation between parents and school.

Parents' Council, thus defined by the law, should be a body that will assist children, teachers and school administration to, by working together, achieve the necessary cooperation in the interest of all, and primarily of children. This requires that Parents' Council for each school year plans the activities that will clearly define the content of its work, deadlines and stakeholders.

⁴ Law on Secondary Education, "Official Gazette of Republic of Srpska", number 74/08, Article 105.

As an advisory body, along with Students' Council, Parents' Council should indicate existing problems in school, but also actively contribute in resolving of all issues in school.

Unfortunately, only in a small number of schools Parents' Councils are active in the work of school, they have clearly defined action plan, they meet regularly and give suggestions for solving problems, and contribute to better cooperation of school and local community. In these schools joint action of parents, pupils and the school administration are organized and the results are seen. These are mostly schools that have good working conditions, long tradition and support of local community and directorate that is aware that the initiative of parents are always welcome and that openness for cooperation and only working together can bring results even when financial resources are not great.

In many schools, about three quarters, we were told that Parents' Council are formed, that they have representatives in the school board but they rarely meet, some almost never, or only when school excursions are current issues. These situation directors lightly justify with the fact that parents do not understand what their role is, that nobody can get forced to do the work if they do not wish so and similar. This is clearly a misunderstanding of the role of Parents' Council by the very directors which is then transferred to all other parents, where the real need for joint work on all issues that children face in educational system is not understood. Parents have the primary obligation and responsibility but school must take its share of responsibility not only for educating but also for upbringing of children.

Individual cases on which the Institution has worked confirm that there is no needed cooperation between school and parents. When a child has a problem of any kind, if until then there has been no necessary cooperation, then shifting of responsibility from one to other side occurs, and the child is left completely aside with the real problem. Shifting of responsibility from a parent to school and from school to parent confirms that they did not recognize joint liability and commitment to do the maximum possible and that together provide the best interest for every child in their school.

On the question posed to children who should take care about their education, they replied that parents are on the first place, and themselves, and then school and "state". These shows how children, by nature of things, determine what is whose role in their education and their growing up, but adults often ignored it.

About the work of Parents' Councils in schools and how they cooperate with children speaks the fact that children, in any workshop, did not know what Parents' Council do, though they all knew that they exist.

When the responses of children and school administration are compared regarding the participation of Parents' Councils in the work of school, shared view is that their involvement is

not sufficient, in some areas it is non-existent and that Parents' Councils must more actively contribute in planning and realization of all important issues in school.

The right to express opinion, freedom of speech, the right to access to information...

Students' Councils

According to the Law on Secondary Education⁵, Students' Councils have the possibility of action in a number and very different areas, from promoting of the interests of school in local community, over the presentation of the attitudes of students in school board to considering the issues of students' success, school trips, working conditions, etc.

Thus defined Students' Council is a serious partner of school administration, faculty and local community. Situation in the field still shows that, although in schools Students' Councils have been appointed, their involvement is not present in the manner and in areas as defined by the law. All directorates claim that their Students' Councils work nicely, they were provided with a special place when it was feasible, they were provided with coordinator and similar. On the question whether members of Students' Council attend meetings of Teachers' Council only in few schools the answer was affirmative.

Directors mostly emphasized that presence of representatives of Students' Council on Teachers' Council meetings so far has not been the practice, it is unpleasant that children listen to "our problems", that even students have no interest in it, etc. What is surprising is that in some schools that was regular practice, but that practice was abandoned without any stated reasons and particular explanation.

As for the presentation of the attitudes of students in School Board, it is mainly associated with the choice of destination for excursions, but even then School Board is not addressed by students themselves but an adult announces their choice.

In Students' Councils was generally emphasized that they have good cooperation with administration, that they support them in their activities and that they are mostly satisfied with their work. Representatives of Students' Councils most often have emphasized the activities on realization of certain projects of educational (peer education) or humanitarian character, and through such activities the cooperation with directorate of school evaluate as good.

Students have confirmed that they have coordinators who, in almost all schools, are trying to help students in realization of their activities. However, it is interesting that only one

⁵ Law on Secondary Education, Article 106.

coordinator was present at the workshop that we performed even though all we met were offered. Students do not complain when they do not have the space to be used exclusively for their meetings and implementing their activities, but are most bothered that they have no opportunity to influence the fact that they can not, to the directly responsible (Teachers' Council, local community) communicate their views. Where they have this opportunity, only in few schools, again they admit that their opinion is listened to but rarely taken into account even when there are grounds, or on what they propose or seek, do not have any feedback. The impression is that Students' Council has influence on events in schools and on other students, but only in certain fields. It is noticeable that there is no necessary communication between children and adults, there is no cooperation between Students' Council and Parents' Council and their joint actions and initiatives and proposals towards School Board and Teachers' Council.

When we collected all the answers about what the members of Students' Council do, it is many humanitarian activities of which some have become traditional (One child one candy), then numerous activities on education and prevention in cooperation with NGOs, networking with schools who educate the same profiles, with schools from Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Europe. Students really work on the promotion of their schools not only in their communities but also beyond and are treated everywhere as serious contributors. Children are increasingly looking for non-formal forms of education in those areas which curriculum does not offer. Children, apparently, react faster than school to changes and demands of a new era, therefore it is very important that with more attention their voice is heard, that their suggestions and initiatives are seriously considered, that it is answered and explained to them why their proposal is not accepted, all those are not only rights of children but needs of society, in order that school system changes and adapts to the needs of youth more quickly.

But even in this area there are good examples. Students of one elementary school, preparing for the project "I am a citizen", have found that some themes emerge at the Home class and Democracy class, and it seemed to them that not enough is said about the topic that interested them, the violence. With the help of the director they have launched an initiative to include into the Curriculum more classes where it would be talked about violence. The Ministry of Education has accepted the initiative and amended the Curriculum in this section.

This is a good example for other schools, that by working together, with proposals and initiatives towards the competent institutions may turn children's ideas into reality.

When we talked with students about possibilities to express their opinions through school magazines, unfortunately, many schools due to financial problems have difficulties to provide funds for school magazine, in some schools, students themselves provided donations in order to print magazine. Several schools have electronic newspaper and students publish in all of them

editorial, journalistic, designers and other tasks. This creative and responsible job they perform with joy and enthusiasm.

In some schools there are info boards, wall papers or school radio.

Students have confirmed that they have need to talk about many issues related to teaching process, cases of physical, verbal, social violence, of not complying with Code of Conduct, relationship of teachers towards students, problems with too extensive curriculum, about rules of evaluation, planned written reviews and other topics, they are reluctant to speak about out of fear that they might cause negative reactions of some professors, and they also wondered how and who to address.

Students think that confidence mailboxes where they could leave their anonymous messages and questions could be helpful for many situations in schools. Some schools have these mailboxes and students have learned over time to seriously propose and seek answers to questions and the content is reviewed by the Students' Council with the help of the coordinator.

One of the questions is why students who are already mature and have clear views on many issues that concern them do not want to publicly express them? The answers are mostly that no one wants to expose themselves to disapproval of professors who believe that children are engaged in something that does not concern them. Most often is about individual professors and their lack of understanding and not about school management.

Protection from violence (protection from neglect and abuse)

The Ombudsman for Children last year conducted a survey on the implementation of the Protocol on the procedure in cases of peer violence in educational system of Republic of Srpska, so that this issue was unavoidable at the workshop. Most often students are educated about violence through workshops and know a lot about it.

However, it is difficult to say which schools have seriously joined the activities related to introduction of children with the Protocol, because in some Student's Councils, some students knew that there is a Protocol, and some did not. Only a few schools implemented the activities in a way that the Students' Council has studied the Protocol and familiarized its class with it. Again, it is about schools that have good organization and rules that apply to all, so in this case, familiarizing with the Protocol went parallel for students, teachers and parents, just as is prescribed by the Protocol.

Children did not say, in any school, that violence is a problem or common phenomenon, but they emphasized that under these they think about physical violence, while verbal violence they considered less dangerous but more frequent.

This additionally commits that this issue – peer violence and violence in general, what are the emergent forms, what are the causes and consequences, must constantly be present in the educational system.

Schools work a lot to ensure that children feel safe, video surveillance is introduced, school police officers are already every day event, all schools have students and teachers on - call that work according to the determined schedule.

However, students believe that no matter how the school was safe, violence can happen in front of school yard and on street, which only confirms that it constantly has to be worked on education of children and that it is a basis for preventive action. Students considered that school police officer should not be sitting in school but rather should move around the school and nearby cafes to have a better insight of events near the school.

Violence through the Internet and mobile phones, according to their statements is increasingly present and although aware of the dangers that this type of communication has, they admit that they do not protect themselves sufficiently even when they know how to do it. In so doing, attention is drawn that elementary school students with lot less caution access social networks and that in primary schools greater consideration should be given to this problem. The discussion on this topic has also opened the issue of the right of children to protection of privacy, the relationship of media towards children and the responsibility of parents and adults for protection of children from inappropriate content.

Health protection

Health protection is a topic on which high school students are happy to speak about. They are interested in many issues from this field, they have a lot of questions, and little or no response.

We were interested in how they learn about health; they replied that it is mainly from the media, magazines and trough the Internet, in workshops and at least in school, except the medical schools. When we asked them whether they want to learn about health, in all schools they have responded positively and suggested topics themselves: hygiene, infectious diseases, addiction diseases, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, etc.

There are not many examples that in schools some teachers talk about physical and mental health and advise students about the issues and problems in this field, but in one school students talked with praise about the professor of physical education that gives them advice on diet, exercise and health and always answers their questions.

Education about health could, in the opinion of students, be optional, could be implemented and by their trained peers (peer education), experts from some fields, but also their professors

who have knowledge and want to share it with them. In this field children want workshops, new methods of work and practical advices adapted to their age and their needs.

When asked if they have a problem of access to health care, because they are in the category of children over 15 years of life, they did not have such situations in practice. No matter that they did not have a problem, compulsory health insurance would have to cover children from 15 to 18 years of age, because they also are only children.

The right to leisure

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Article 31. guarantees to every child the right to play and leisure. How much children have the opportunity to spend that time well, how young people spend their leisure time, who in school and town offers the most content and what else they would want to do in their leisure time, are just some of the questions that require answers in securing this right of the child.

High school students have confirmed that they understand that only good organization of activities provides plenty of leisure time. However, they emphasize that in addition to it, leisure time is decreasing because curriculums are loaded with materials, often unnecessary, and that part of subjects could be studied as elective courses or similar.

The most common activities that they have in their leisure time are the Internet and Facebook, which further warns - is that quality leisure time or it is used due to lack of other contents. Further follow socializing in bars and sporting. These were cited by young people in cities and smaller municipalities and regardless of whether students are in general education or vocational high schools.

As for schools' sections students recognize that there are plenty and that they are diverse, but are not always well attended, why is this so, children have no special explanation. On the other hand number of sections that offer excursions, travels, public appearances and the possibility of creative expression is small, which according to their assessment would be much more attractive to students.

In their free time they prefer to do sports and travel.

High school students from Banja Luka are mostly satisfied with what is offered in the city, but in smaller municipalities, children are deprived of many contents where they could spend their leisure time. In some municipalities young people were trying to solve the issue of cinema eg, but did not find the understanding of the local community.

It is interesting that in one high school there are no sports sections, and there are young sports talents, and every time before sports festivals the trainings are organized and children

achieve good results and win awards. Schools that offer sections that have outgrown the limits of school activities should be surely praised, and it would be good, if modeled on their work, sections are organized in other schools in Republic of Srpska.

The common assessment is that the largest number of young people does not spend their free time in a quality manner, either because local community does not offer content that would allow it or because this right of the child is not accepted as important as other rights. Leisure time of children and their quality implementation is very important for proper development and growing up of every child, therefore schools, together with local community would have to create conditions for the provision of this right.

Schools, regardless of whether in the area there is a variety of options for spending leisure time, should work on modernization of sections and other forms of extracurricular activities for children, of course, adapted to their age and their needs.

Knowledge of rights

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child⁶ binds that children, as well as adults are familiarized with the principles and provisions of the Convention as broad as possible and in an appropriate and active manner.

Whether, how and about what rights are children informed?

Children who are familiar with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have mostly undergone the workshops that were organized in schools or have learned something in classes of Democracy.

The fact is that many children knew a lot about their rights, even though they were not aware that they are guaranteed to them by the UN Convention, of which in some schools, up to our arrival they have never heard. All children believe that they should learn about their rights and to the question from whom, on the first place they put their parents and teachers and peer educators.

When asked if someone violates their rights all the answers could be summed up in one that is "Maybe someone violates them, but we do not know." This response just confirms that children do not know enough, even when they are violated they do not know that they have the right to protection and how to achieve it, the second part of children does not know their rights and are unable even to say whether their rights are violated.

⁶ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 42.

One of the rights on which they most frequently warn, because it is not respected, is the child's right to express opinions and participate in all proceedings that affect them. Basic request of this not only right but one of the four basic principles of the Convention, is that adults should encourage children, to call them, to encourage them to be active subjects in all processes in their communities, to seriously consider their opinions and to explain and answer them if their opinion, according to the opinion of those who make decisions about that, is not the best interest. This right of the child is definitely the right that is at least understood and it is difficult to talk about how is implemented.

Knowledge of children about their rights differ from school to school, at the workshops they have confirmed that they want to talk about all these issues and practical experiences they have, that with this they have complemented their skills and learned that they are entitled to their rights and how and who to address in situations when they have a problem.

Conversations with children about their rights are always mutually beneficial.

Children in these discussions primarily learn something new about the issues and problems that they face with on their way of growing up, gain confidence, relieve themselves from dilemmas they face with, get answers to questions that are problem for them, they learn that it is very important to talk and not to put the problems under the carpet, they learn how to talk, to hear the interlocutor and to understand it as they expect that the other side hears what they are thinking about.

Adults, in conversations with children, if they hear them, always can learn a lot.

Children, not just in conversations, but also by their behavior and manner of reacting in certain situations send messages that we should recognize.

Summing up the discussions with children in schools where we organized the workshops, we find it necessary to:

1. Establish an active and meaningful cooperation between parents and schools, because both have an obligation and responsibility to care for proper development and growing up of children,
2. Activate work of Parents' Council in schools, not to comply with a form determined by law, but because it is a real need of children, parents and school,
3. Work on co-operation of Students' Councils and Parent's Councils in all matters relevant to the work of school, which as advisory bodies should actively contribute in planning and realization of all the issues important for the functioning of school,
4. Work on the application of new teaching methods and modernization of teaching process in a manner that student is an active participant in the learning process.
5. Improve and actualize the work of school sections and adapt them to the needs of students in order for young people to better spend their leisure time but also to have the opportunity to develop their talents and gifts,
6. Provide students the right to express their own opinion on all that concerns them whether by individual addressing or through Students' Councils in order to enhance communication between students, teachers, parents, management and local community,
7. In making important decisions in school seek the opinion of children and inform them on decisions made and on the attitude of the school to their opinion,

8. The right of children to participation requires the cooperation of teachers and students and there is no such cooperation without mutual communication, and it requires defined rules of conduct that apply to all in school,

9. Every school should have Code of Conduct, and it should be in every classroom, children and teachers should know what is and what is not acceptable behavior, what are educational and disciplinary measures and sanctions and for which situations of inappropriate behavior are imposed,

10. Evaluation of students, according to the Rulebook, requires that evaluation is communicated to student, so that any withholding of grade, especially when a student asks for it, is contrary to the established rules,

11. Disciplinary actions for inappropriate behavior of students, including unexcused absences from classes, conduct in accordance with the Rules defined by law and with the aim of educational activity towards students,

12. Ensure that teaching children about their health should be part of an educational – upbringing process, adapted to their age and their needs and in manner acceptable to them, through workshops, peer education, etc, on issues - reproductive health, healthy nutrition, infectious diseases, mental health, addiction diseases , contraception.

13. The Rules of procedure in cases of peer violence make available to every student, post it at the appropriate places in school and keep coming back to it in order for it to have primarily function of prevention and education and not only for cases when violence at school happens.

Ombudsman for Children

Nada Grahovac LL.M