

SECURITY IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SERBIA

Aleksandra Ilić • Zorica Stanimirović

SECURITY
IN THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
IN SERBIA

Publisher:

University of Belgrade - Faculty of Security Studies

For the Publisher:

Prof. Vladimir N. Cvetković, PhD

Editors

Zorica Stanimirović, PhD

Aleksandra Ilić, PhD

Translators

Zoran Pavlović

Danijela Nejković, MagSci

Jelena Bošnjak

Proofreader

Marija Bosančić

Print

Čigoja štampa

Edition

150 copies

ISBN 978-86-80144-34-4

The collection of papers is result of the research in the project “Security and protection of the educational system management and function in Serbia (basic information, principles, protocols, procedures and tools)” (N 47017) which has been organized by the Faculty of Security Studies, University of Belgrade and is financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (2011-2019)

SECURITY IN THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SERBIA

Editors

Prof. Zorica Stanimirović, PhD

Prof. Aleksandra Ilić, PhD



Belgrade, 2019

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AS THE KEY SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT IN THE SECURITY OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Sladana Đurić
Branislava Popović-Čitić
Marija Marković

Summary

There is a general consensus in contemporary scientific literature that a school climate, as a multi-dimensional construct that encompasses physical, social and academic aspects, is a key socio-psychological factor in creating a safe and secure school environment. The intense interest of scientists, which dates back to the first decades of the last century, has resulted in the development of different research approaches and models that can assess and improve the general social climate in the school and thus create the necessary prerequisites for the safe functioning in the school environment. Starting from the importance of the school climate in the development and maintenance of security in educational institutions, this paper, in addition to defining the concept and describing the most influential models of assessment of the school climate, deals with the characteristics of a safe school environment and proposes activities with which the key participants in the school life can contribute to the development and maintenance of a positive social climate in school.

Keywords: *school climate, security, educational institutions*

Introduction

Schools are most commonly characterized as the universal medium of transition from childhood to adulthood. And as much as it seems that the organization and the way in which the schools function are significantly influenced by the socio-economic context, Freiberg (1999) concludes that only variations are in question here, and that schools around the world are similar in all the most important elements. All schools are organized in such a way that the teachers work with a group of students, the timetable and all activities are determined, the date and time for starting and ending the classes on daily and school year level are defined, the classes take place in recognizable setting similar to each other all over the world, and the administrative system is mostly hierarchically organized. Besides a relatively identical appearance and structure, all schools share the same problems: poor grades, inadequate behavior, violence, dropouts, and the problem of the increasing number of students, which Freiberg calls, "tourists" who work their way through school at the expense of "citizens", the students who actively learn. It is precisely due to this perception of the school as an institution which is structurally and functionally universal, in the context of common problems they face, that the obligation of the creators of national education policies, is founded. Thus it compels them to take into account the world's widest experience when planning the strategies for improving the quality of work of educational institutions. On the other hand, scientists and researchers in this area from around the world can fruitfully share theoretical and practical achievements in order to improve this important field in the best possible way.

Over the last two decades, intensive efforts have been made in the academic and professional community to identify factors which affect the success of a school. As stated in the highly cited publication, issued by the National School Climate Council (2007), numerous studies only confirm what teachers and parents are quite aware of: a safe and supportive school environment in which students develop positive social relationships and in which they are respected, develop their capacities, and the sense of responsibility in the best way. A positive, safe and clean school environment is crucial for the development of children and the success of their education. Students can realize their full potential in an environment in which they are physically, socially and emotionally secure. The feeling of insecurity, on the other hand, negatively influences students' motivation, attitudes, behavior, and the overall functioning of the school. Schools in which incidents of peer violence, fights, and gossiping are recorded, on a daily basis, create an environment in which students feel poorly integrated, and teachers are insecure and unmotivated.

Educators recognized the significance of the school climate for successful educational processes more than 100 years ago. In professional literature, the beginnings of documented efforts to improve the school environment are related to the book *The Management of a City School* (Perry, 1908). Arthur Perry, the author of the book, and the principal of a school in Brooklyn, emphasizes the importance of the school environment for successful learning:

Although it is practically impossible to quantify the extent to which the quality of their environment affects the students, it should be acknowledged that the environment has a definite impact on them and it is the school's obligation to provide something more than an ordinary "stay" at school. (p. 303)

Nevertheless, it was not before the sixties of the previous century that the systematic study of the school climate was initiated. George Stern (Stern, 1970; 1971) is one of the first psychologists who applied the concept of organizational climate in a study of higher education institutions, based on the analogy of individuals and organizations, in the early 1960s. This concept was widely accepted, both in the further research of organizational climate in school institutions, and in the research of climate in business institutions. Although the concept undergoes further developing in terms of specific operationalization in compliance with the type of institutions that are researched, the common starting point is retained. The climate is formed from the organizational practice important for all members of the organization, it is defined by those who perceive it and influences the attitudes and behavior of all participants (Đurić, Popović-Čitić, 2010).

The concept of the school climate

Although there is no widespread definition of the school climate, the vast majority of researchers and scientists point out that it also significantly reflects the subjective experience of the participants in the educational process (Cohen, 2006). Over the past three decades, many researchers have recognized the various elements of this complex construct, and the professional literature on the school climate is filled with very diverse attempts to define this term (Table 1). The elements which make up the content of the concept of school climate are extensive and complex and include unwritten rules, values, attitudes that become the style of interaction which occurs between students, teachers, and administrative staff of a school.

Author	Mentioned elements
(Tagiuri, 1968)	ecology (physical and material aspects), special milieu (the social dimension that relates to all individuals and groups), social system (the social dimension that relates to patterns of individuals and groups) and culture (the social dimension that relates to the belief system, values, cognitive structures and meanings)
(Johnson, Johnson, 1993)	aspects of the school environment, the individuality of students and teachers, academic achievement, level of physical activity, processes and materials used in teaching
(Manning, Saddlemire, 1999)	trust, respect, mutual obligations, care for the welfare of others
(Anderson, 1982)	the collective feeling of all participants ("we feel")
(Creemers, Reezigt, 1999)	physical dimensions of the school (school building, hallways, schoolyard and playground) and classrooms (size, position within the school building), the social system of the school (relations and interactions of teachers and teaching and administrative staff, rules that regulate the behavior and relations with respect to students, parents, and outside actors) and students in each classroom (the mutual relations and interactions of students, and students and teachers) tidiness of the school and classrooms (arrangement, functionality, warmth), expectations of teachers in relation to pupils (positive expectations, sense of self-efficacy, professional relationships).
(Marshall, 2004)	the number and quality of interactions between adults and students, the perception of school environment by students and teachers, environmental factors (such as the building, classrooms, the quality of materials used in building), academic performance, the sense of security, school size, the feeling of trust and respect for students and teachers
(Zullig et al. 2010)	order, security, and discipline, academic results, social relations, school facilities and equipment, school connection with the local community
Macneil, Maclin, 2005)	continuous exchange of ideas (on a daily basis, teachers are exchanging opinions on teaching, plans and programs, ways of testing, school organization), cooperation (teachers are engaged in teams that collectively address teaching issues, program improvements, research), equality (teacher participation in the decision-making process is not strictly formal, in meetings everyone has the right to vote and express their opinion), practical applicability (teachers think about whether what they do has practical applicability and whether it helps students, colleagues, and school)
(Owens, 1987)	the sum of individual perceptions which individuals have in relation to different aspects of the environment and organization of activities
(Haynes et al., 1993)	quality and consistency of interactions that are established in school, which mostly affect the cognitive, social and psychological development of children
(Cohen et al., 2009)	quality and character of school life based on patterns of experience within it that reflect norms, goals, values, interpersonal relations, teaching practice and learning, and the organizational structure

(Bear et al., 2009)	positive relationships between the pupils, teachers, other staff and families; feeling of belonging somewhere (students are involved in decision-making processes, values of community and membership are promoted); a system of positive support (reduction of punishment as a way of dealing with inadequate behavior); high expectations in terms of academic achievement; developing social and emotional skills among all students, involving parents and community members in the work process
Joksimović, Bogunović (2005)	mutual respect for students and teachers, correct relationships among school staff members, and successful cooperation between school and parents
Additionally mentioned variables	decisive leadership, development of educational resources, high morale of teachers, school size and the ratio of teachers and pupils, socio-economic status, percentage of students with problematic behavior

Table 1 *The elements of school climate – the review of the most important standpoints*

Source, Đurić, Popović-Ćitić (2011)

Although it is difficult to give a concise definition of the school climate, researchers agree that it is a multi-dimensional construct, which includes physical, social and academic dimensions. The following components are usually stated as being the components of the physical dimension: the appearance of the school building and classrooms, the size of the school relative to the number of students and teachers, the order in school and the organization of work, the availability of resources for work, work comfort and the security of all participants. The social dimension of the school climate includes the quality of interpersonal relationships between students, teachers, and administrative staff, the equal and fair treatment of students by teachers and administrative staff, and the extent to which students, teachers, and staff participate in the decision-making process in school. The academic dimension includes the quality of teaching, teachers' expectations in terms of student progress, monitoring students' achievement, and shortly informing the students and parents about the achieved results (Đurić, Popović-Ćitić, 2010; Đurić, Popović-Ćitić, 2011).

The assessment of school climate

Past efforts to establish an adequate methodological approach to assessing the school climate indicators result in a large number of proposed assessment models (a review of the most important models in Đurić, Popović-Ćitić, 2010). The widespread application of different models of school climate assessment often leads to the combination of a basic concept with examining the school environment, learning climate, sense of belonging, academic climate, and social climate. The concept of the school climate, thus, showed an integrative potential to include a study of a wide range of different work dimensions in school. However, this is precisely why many critics of this broad-based concept object to its lack of a clear definition, while this definition is even more blurred and nonsensical when it's looked into thoroughly. In different studies, a diverse range of characteristics, which should reflect the open and closed school climate, is provided, and critics of the school climate theory argue that it is difficult to find a consistent difference between the two types of schools. Their main objection is the inadequate theoretical substantiation of the explanation of the basic assertions. Critics

suggest that it is not enough to just to connect the quality of the climate with the achievement of the student, but also to show why they are connected. Responses to the criticism of this theory would definitely strengthen it further, provide a deeper insight into the dynamics of school organization and enable more effective solutions to practical problems.

One of the particularly successful models of school climate assessment is the several-year-long activity of the National School Climate Center (NSCC), founded in 1996 at the University of Columbia. In a frequently cited document *National School Climate Standards* (National School Climate Center, 2011), associates of this institute define five standards which support the effects of establishing a positive school climate:

1. The school community has a common vision and plan for the promotion, improvement and maintenance of a positive school climate.
2. The school community establishes a policy that specifically promotes:
 - the development and sustainability of social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual skills, knowledge, preferences and engagement, and
 - A comprehensive system for overcoming obstacles in learning and education and reintegration of students who have been excluded from the schooling process.
3. The practices of the school community identify, give priority to and support
 - The promotion and realization of a positive social, emotional, ethical and civic development of pupils;
 - The empowerment of teaching engagement, learning, and all school activities;
 - Overcoming obstacles in learning and education;
 - Developing and maintaining appropriate operational infrastructure and creating mechanisms in order to achieve this standard.
4. The school community creates an environment in which all members feel welcome, supported and safe at school - socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.
5. The school community develops an engaged practice, activities and norms which promote social and civic responsibility, and commitments to social justice.

Out of such an understanding of the complex construct of the school climate, scientists, engaged in the NSCC, created a special instrument, **the Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI)**, as a nationally recognized inventory of the main indicators of the school climate. Through a much extended application by hundreds of schools in the US, this instrument proved to be a valid and effective tool for profiling the situation within five dimensions of the school: security, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships, institutional environment and teaching staff (Table 2).

Table 2, *The school climate indicators*

	Dimension	Main Indicator
Security	1. Roles and norms	Clearly defined rules in regards to physical violence, verbal abuse, disturbing and teasing; clear and consistent implementation of norms which regulate the intervention of adults.
	2. The feeling of physical safety	The feeling that both the students and adults are safe from physical jeopardy in school

	3. The feeling of socio-emotional	The feeling that the students are protected from verbal abuse, teasing and exclusion.
Teaching and learning	4. Support in learning	Developing activities which support learning: encouraging and positively accepting various opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills, taking risk, and independent reasoning, the atmosphere that encourages dialogue and question asking, academic challenges and individual attention.
	5. Social and civic learning	Supporting the development of social and civic knowledge and skills such as: efficient listening, conflict resolving, self-reflexing and emotion control, empathy, personal responsibility, personal responsibility and ethical decision making
	6. Respect for diversity	Mutual respect of individual differences (e.g. gender, race, culture, etc.) at all levels in school: student-student, adults-student, adults-adults, and respecting general norms of tolerance.
Interpersonal relations	7. Social support (adults)	Developing the pattern of social support in the attitude adults have towards students, such as high expectation of success at school, willingness to listen to a student and get to know them as individuals, and personal care for the students' problems.
	8. Social support (students)	Developing peer social support: developing friendly relations for the purpose of a better socialization, providing help with learning, solving problems and helping new students adjust.
Institutional surroundings	9. School connectivity / engagement	A positive identification with the school and its norms with the aim of a wider participation in the school life of students, staff and their families.
	10. The physical environment	Cleanliness, order, a pleasant ambiance and a tidy school interior, the availability of adequate school equipment.
Staff	11. The management	School administration, which creates and promotes a clear vision, available to the school staff and works on their improvement.
	12. Professional relations	The development of positive attitudes and relations between the members of the staff who promote efficient work and collective learning.

Adapted from: *National School Climate Center (2007)*

Usually, there are two ways of measuring the school climate: direct and indirect. The direct method of measuring requires an interaction between the examiner and the examinee or the tested situation, while the indirect one relates to the secondary data analysis. The most common forms of direct data gathering entail using a survey, observation and interview, and also video-recordings, student drawings, focus-group interviewing, etc. Within the categories used as indirect sources of data, the most commonly applied method is the analysis of various school records: attendance records, disciplinary procedures, work of the pedagogical-psychological team, school clinics, visit records, telephone calls, and tardiness records. This category includes the examination of physical characteristics of the school building, hallways, classrooms and yard. An adequate combination of direct and indirect measures ensures that a detailed profile of the school is obtained (Freiberg, Stein, 1999).

Schools must accept the obligation of continuous assessment and improvement of school climate indicators. This implies the acceptance of the standard measurement system, creation of adequate instrumentation, ensuring adequate employee training, and continuous consultations with experts.

The security of educational institutions

The concept of a safe school implies a school without violence, the safety of students and employees, protected school property and undisturbed classes. But the objectives that need to be achieved must be balanced with the primary functions of schooling: education, upbringing, socialization, and a healthy way of life when it comes to children and young people.

School security is a complex phenomenon which is based on mutual interaction of many factors, as the very understanding of safety is formed as a complex perception of self-safety in the synergy with psychological, economic, political, micro-social and other variables (Đurić, 2006). Research from the last two to three decades also point, not only, to the multi stratification of the very concept of safety, but also to the interdependence of social, economic, ecological political, demographic, and other trends in the contemporary society. In this context, we should bear in mind that school, as one of the decisive mediums of socialization, reflects not only the actual state of affairs in a community, but also affects directly the circumstances in which generations of students of today will be the creators of the social atmosphere on the macro level in the future.

Different security risks may be at work in each school. Each school is specific, and must develop its own and specific strategy of identification, prevention, and suppression of security risks, on the basis of general guidelines and standardized terminology. A rational, consistent and adequately structured system of security risk prevention and suppression is of utmost importance for the school to function as, above all, an educational institution. Students' and employees' belief in the ability of school management, to successfully prevent and respond to security threats, increases their sense of personal security. Also, if students or teachers feel that the risks are not clearly and adequately identified, or if the risks occur and the management of the school seems to handle it unsuccessfully and insecurely, the confidence in the school's ability to create a safe environment will be seriously shaken.

Therefore, the realization of the ideal of a safe and secure school requires a broad and versatile approach. Only if the entire community makes rationally designed and well-coordinated efforts, including teachers, students, parents, general and specialized services, it will be possible to improve the level of school safety. A successful school is the one

which has a developed plan for preventing security risks and responding to them, with formed crisis teams that are responsible for its implementation. The plan should include rules and principles for the identification and assessment of security risks, the forms of concrete cooperation with parents, the local community and the wider social environment, and standardized procedures for dealing with crisis situations.

Identifying and assessing the kind of risk the school faces and its extent, is the first step in building a successful strategy for improving the security of the school environment. However, the mere existence of effective strategies, to identify and tackle security risks in schools, is not enough to create a safe school. Confronting security risks is possible if there is a set of developed preventive measures, which means to develop preventive strategies and programs. These strategies and programs, for security risk prevention, should include constant training and improvement of the teaching, administrative and specialized staff in schools, and the development of cooperation programs with the students, parents, local community and state authorities, in order to reduce the possibility of security risk occurrence in schools.

Physical and psychological aspects of school security have far-reaching consequences not only on the teaching process, but also on the overall health of the young people and the communities in which they live. Cooperation between the school administration and all relevant institutions, adequate training, assistance, funding and the implementation of selected models are important for a successful implementation of each model which aims to create a safe school environment. The experience from Western countries shows that the harmonization of efforts at the level of the wider community (city, county...) is a powerful incentive for developing security in schools.

The physical and technical aspect of school protection implies the physical characteristics of a school facility which reduce the degree of risk, adequate material resources for risk monitoring and a quick response to a risk (video and alarm surveillance, technical security, protective equipment), along with human resources which, with their skills, knowledge and/or authority are able to adequately respond to security threats (situation assessment, situation control, implementation of protection measures, use of protective equipment). Surely, one of the important factors is the size of the school. The number of students attending a school and the number of students in a class have a great impact on the security of the school environment, and on the quality of the school climate. There are unequivocal empirical confirmations that smaller schools achieve better success. Smaller schools provide more opportunities for a better interaction between pupils and teachers, greater involvement of students in extracurricular activities, easier identification of those students who need to be worked with additionally. Although there is no consensus on the optimal number of students, research results indicate that ideal primary schools would have from 300 to 400 students, and ideal secondary schools from 400 to 800 students (Cotton, 1996).

Positive school climate as the context of establishing a safe school environment

Education, proper socialization, spirit development, the promotion of a healthy life and the adoption of desirable values, are the objectives which the school can accomplish to a further extent only in adequate conditions. The school climate, by its definition, reflects the experiences of students, school staff and parents in broad areas of social, emotional and ethical issues. A large number of research points to a clear link between the quality of the school climate and the effectiveness of risk prevention, quality teaching process, and learning effectiveness. Risk prevention is in direct correlation with the

climate characterized by the security of children, their full involvement in school activities, and responsibility and care for all participants.

Different situations that can impair the positive social climate in the school, and consequently the successful performance of educational process are considered to be the risks of socio-psychological nature. A safe school implies a school without violence, the security of pupils and employees, the protection of school property and uninterrupted classes. Creating a secure school requires an all-embracing approach to the early identification of all warning signs that disturb the social climate and can jeopardize school security (Table 3).

Effective strategies for identifying and assessing security risks in schools should take into account a number of factors, and recognize the correlation of security and order with the social, emotional and academic development of children. The quality of the social climate in the school is usually expressed through the following elements: the quality of interpersonal relationships in school, victimization of students and teachers, the perception of the level of school security by teachers, pupils and parents, the existence of a program of prevention and reduction of violent behavior of students.

Table 3 Characteristics of a safe school environment

Safe school Features	Descriptive indicators
Instigates school Success	A positive school environment is the one that encourages the idea that all children can achieve success at school and can behave in a decent manner, respecting individual differences at the same time. In addition, there is a developed awareness that students, school employees, and parents are equally responsible for the creation of this school environment. Adequate resources and programs help to achieve these expectations. It is unlikely that students who are deprived of such a school environment will behave in a socially desirable and acceptable way.
Involves families in a meaningful way	Students whose families actively monitor their success in and out of school have more chances to achieve success at school and fewer chances of being involved in some socially undesirable activities. School communities must help parents feel welcome at school and remove obstacles to their active participation in the process of monitoring the education of their children. Successful schools also encourage parents to express concern about their children and provide them with the help they need to address the unwanted behavior of their children.
Develops connections with the local community	All relevant social participants must be engaged in creating a safe school environment. Schools which work closely with parents, state authorities and the local community may benefit from all of them. When these connections are weak, there is a growing risk of violence in schools, and the ability, to help children at risk of violent behavior, is reduced.

<p>Instigates positive relations students and staff</p>	<p>Research indicates that one of the most important factors in preventing violent behavior of students is a positive relationship with adults who can help them when needed. They often expect school staff to give them advice, support and guide them. Some children need help in overcoming the feeling of isolation and in establishing relationships with others. Successful schools also foster positive relations among students - they encourage students to help one another and feel comfortable helping others when they need it.</p>
<p>Openly discusses security issues</p>	<p>Children come to school with different perceptions - and often misconceptions - about death, violence, and use of weapons. Schools can reduce security risks by teaching children the danger of firearms, and appropriate strategies for controlling emotions, expressing anger in a suitable way and solving conflicts. Also, in schools, children should learn that they are responsible for their own actions and that their choices sometimes have consequences.</p>
<p>Treats all students with equal respect</p>	<p>The main source of conflict in many schools is the existence of discrimination or privilege of students (or the students' sense of the existence of such a practice), due to their nationality, gender, race, social status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, physical appearance or something else - either by employees or by the peers. Students who are treated unfairly or have the feeling of being treated in such a manner may become targets of violent behavior. Also, victims of discriminatory behavior can react aggressively towards themselves or others. Successful schools promote the idea that all children are important and respected. There is a deliberate, systematic endeavor – for example, by exhibiting student works, publicly displaying the best works, respecting the differences among students – to establish a state of affairs that reflects care and encourages students to feel close to the school community.</p>
<p>Finds the ways in which students can express their problems</p>	<p>It has been discovered that peers are those who are most often told, in advance, about the potential occurrence of certain security risks at school. Schools must find ways in which students can discreetly disclose, without putting themselves in any jeopardy, problematic behavior that can lead to dangerous situations. Students who report possible violent behavior in school must be protected. It is important that schools strengthen positive relations between pupils and adults, so that students feel safe when giving information about possibly hazardous situations.</p>
<p>Helps children feel safe when expressing their feelings</p>	<p>It is very important that children feel safe when expressing their needs, fears and concerns to school staff. When it is not possible to talk to the adults who ought to take care of them, students feel isolated, rejected and disappointed, which increases the probability of undesirable behavior.</p>

Offers extended daily program for children	School programs that take place before and after classes can be effective in violence prevention. Successful programs are well-monitored and they provide support to children and various activities, such as counseling, mentoring, artwork, volunteer work and work in clubs, computer work, and help with their homework.
Affirms the development of personality and civic awareness	Apart from its educational role, the school must help students become good citizens. First off, the school must promote universal values, such as honesty, kindness, responsibility and respect for others. The school should, also, advocate civic values. Respecting the fact that the parents are those who are the most responsible for the moral development of their children, the school should cooperate with them in promoting these values.
Identifies problems and evaluates the progress towards a solution	Schools must openly and objectively investigate circumstances that can be dangerous for students and employees, and circumstances in which members of the school community feel vulnerable or scared. Safe schools continuously evaluate progress in identifying problems and collecting data for approaching the solution. Moreover, successful schools provide this information to students, parents and the local community.
Supports students in their development and create work habits	Young people need help in planning their future and in developing the skills that will make them successful. For example, the school can inform students about the possibilities of volunteer work, youth employment programs, and assisting jobs that will make it easier for them to connect with adults in the community.

A positive school climate is achieved when students feel comfortable, when they are respected and accepted, safe in an environment in which they establish sincere interactions. In short, an efficient school should provide a healthy and safe environment for uninterrupted teaching, a pleasant environment of good quality for school activities, and to develop capacities for rapid response and adaptation to changes in security level. All school staff, students, parents and members of the local community must participate in the creation of a safe school environment.

Schools which are safe, besides being less vulnerable to violence and other security risks, are also more successful schools. Successful schools are characterized by clearly defined objectives of the school performance improvement plan, monitoring and analysis of the implementation of the school performance improvement plan, high educational criteria for all students, clear and concrete rules of conduct of pupils and teachers, the fact that students must refer to each other and must participate actively in the educational process.

Developing, strengthening and maintaining a safe learning environment implies creating a tolerant social climate in which all students feel comfortable and secure. Young people, especially during adolescence, have a strong need to be accepted by their peers. However, due to prejudice, ignorance and intolerance, some students or groups of students, may be unaccepted and rejected by the peer group. Sources of conflict, in most schools, are the incorrect treatment of individual students, conditioned by their ethnicity, race, gender, religious or social affiliation, physical appearance and disability, and sexual

orientation. Encouraging students to accept diversity is possible by keeping them informed, introducing rules that prevent abuse and discrimination, and providing opportunities for participation in support groups.

Since the mid-1990s, more and more theorists of the school climate expand the meaning of the basic construct to the very broad meaning of the "school environment" that should include the activities of parents and communities (Stringfield, 1994). Following such an idea, the security of educational institutions should be a joint project of all participants. In creating and maintaining a positive school climate, students, teachers, other teaching staff, and parents actively participate (Table 4), and such complex efforts must be supported by the wider community. Therefore, not only parents, employees, school and local authorities, security authorities and others whose activities are directly related to the school, but all those who, in one way or another, encounter the consequences of the positive or negative atmosphere in the school environment are parties interested in the prosperity of the school. (Đurić, 2007).

Table 4 Recommended activities of the participants

Participants	Activities
The School	Providing strong support, by the management, in assessing and improving the school safety
	Reshaping the school ambiance with the aim of eliminating the dark, separated or unmonitored ones rooms
	Introducing the system of reporting and analyzing the violent and non-criminal incidents
	Creating effective disciplinary rules
	Establishing a partnership with the police
	Engaging security experts, so as to develop and maintain the school security system
	School staff training in all aspects of violence prevention
	Making it possible for all students to talk to school psychologist and pedagogue
	Creating a plan for responding in crisis situations
	Implementing the program of education and training for the prevention of violence at school
	Creating the climate of tolerance
	Cooperation with the community, with the aim of improving students' security
	Active involvement of students in the process of decision-making regarding the creation of school rules and programs
Parents	Preparing the annual report on the problematic behavior of students and school security
	Accountable and disciplined behavior
	Reporting threats and violent behavior to the school staff

	Acquiring the behavior which avoids victimization
	Asking for help
	Active communication with children
	Consistency in disciplining children
	Providing the model example of pro-social behavior
	Being involved in the school and local community activities
	Keeping any weapons out of children's reach
	Restricting the exposure of children to criminal behavior

In any case, the school should not be given the role of the passive recipient of the community's influence, in which it is functioning, but should be an active creator of the social environment. Experiences from some Western countries show that schools can be an integrative factor that gathers and encourages the entire local community territorially linked to the school area. At the same time, when experiential-based social, emotional and ethical education integrates into teaching and learning methods, teachers can develop students' academic and social skills, their understanding and the abilities of their full participation in social processes (Cohen, 2006).

Schools must provide an environment in which all students will feel they are integrated members of the school community. For this purpose, a number of strategies have been developed to help facilitate this and to establish the highest quality communication among all relevant participants. We will only mention some of the most important:

- Circle of Friends Strategy (based on the idea that each student is provided with communication channels with all other participants, from experts and school authorities to close people, in order to establish ongoing support);
- Mentoring programs (mentors meet and spend time with identified students to exchange experience);
- Teacher counseling programs (the student is assigned a teacher as a personal advisor);
- Peer support programs (one group of students helps other students with learning, establishing better communication, making friends and solving personal problems);
- The Freshmen's Club (making a club of students in charge of accepting new students and including them in school activities);
- Extra-curricular activities (including as many students as possible in various forms of extra-curricular activities compliant with their wishes and affinities);
- Positive experience strategy – school assistants (special help is organized for particular students, so that they can be more successful in learning)
- Programs with adults (adults from the local community are selected to spend some time in school and work with individual students or small groups of them).

Conclusion

Besides the generally accepted standpoint that schools are among the most secure places for young people, heavy incidents and their serious consequences, point to the obligation of the community to make a permanent effort in order to improve security in

schools. The existence of security risk in schools is the reflection of much wider, social issues, and their identification and resolution, calls for a coordinated collaboration of all relevant participants (Đurić, Popović-Ćitić, 2007). Creating a safe and secure school environment implies multiple aspects and dimensions that include the positive school climate, system of common values, norms and objectives, interpersonal relations of good quality, and adequate condition of school facilities. The security of the school, as a social objective and action, may be achieved only by a rationally designed and well-coordinated effort of the whole community, including educators, students, parents, and general and specialized services. Students and teachers must feel secure in all segments of their activities. Thus, the positive school climate is the key factor in creating a secure and safe school environment which is necessary for quality educational and upbringing process.

References

- Anderson, C. S. (1982). The search for school climate: a review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 52(3), pp. 368-420.
- Bear, G. G., Blank, J. & Smith, C. D. (2009). Fact sheet 7: School climate. Consortium to Prevent school violence (CPsv). Preuzeto avgusta 2011, sa www.preventschoolviolence.org.
- Cohen, J. (2006). Social, emotional, ethical and academic education: Creating a climate for learning, participation in democracy, and well-being. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(2), pp. 201-237.
- Cohen, J., McCabe, L., Michelli, N. M. & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, teacher education and practice. *Teachers College Record*, 111(1), pp.180-213.
- Cotton, K. (1996). *School size, school climate, and student performance* (School Improvement Research series, Close-up no. 20). Portland oR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Creemers, B. P. M. & Reezigt, G. J. (1999). The role of school and classroom climate in elementary school learning environments. In H. J. Freiberg (ed.), *School climate: measuring, improving and sustaining healthy learning environments* (pp. 30-48). London: Palmer Press.
- Đurić, S. (2006). Metodologija prikupljanja podataka za potrebe procene bezbednosti u školama. *Zbornik radova Fakulteta bezbednosti*, pp. 187-216.
- Đurić, S., (2007). Strategije za identifikovanje, prevenciju i suzbijanje bezbednosnih rizika u školama. in: S. Đurić (ed.), *Bezbednosni rizici u školama: Modeli otkrivanja i reagovanja* (pp.13-28). Beograd: Fakultet bezbednosti.
- Đurić, S., Popović-Čitić, B. (2007). *Bezbedna škola*. Beograd: Fakultet bezbednosti.