

# Education of children in Poland

## – selected aspects

Iga Kazimierczyk – Foundation “Space for Education”

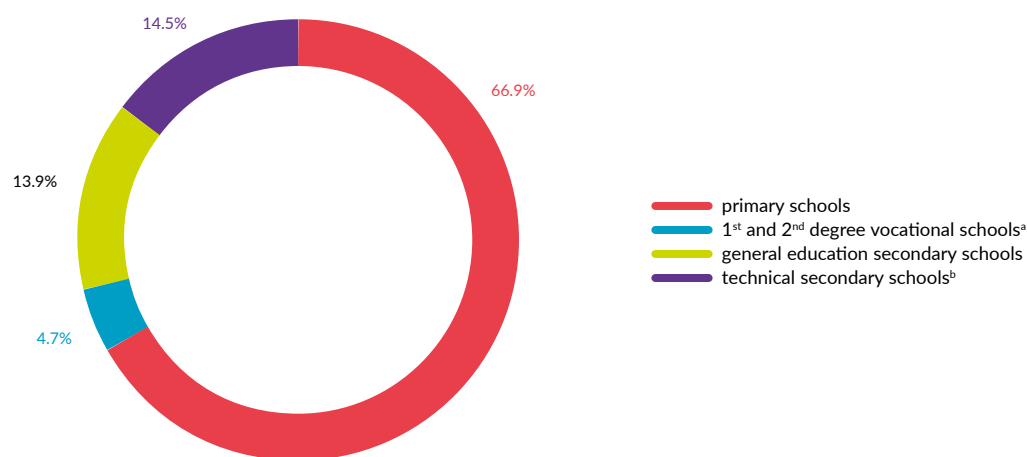
### List of issues

---

- 218 Changes in education in recent years
- 220 School in the pandemic
- 221 Preschool education
- 224 Acceptance of violence/discrimination – teachers’ attitudes
- 226 Safety in schools (accidents, peer victimisation, staff violence)
- 228 Curriculum, sex education
- 229 Psychological and pedagogical support
- 230 Foreign children in schools, including current refugees from Ukraine
- 231 Home schooling
- 232 Student empowerment
- 233 Summary
- 234 References
- 236 Legal references

The Polish education system includes preschool education and primary and secondary education in schools (vocational, general and technical secondary schools). Childcare for children up to the age of 3 years is not included in the field of education in Poland, although in many countries early childhood education is part of the education system. In the 2020/21 school year, 4.9 million children, adolescents and adults were educated in schools of all types, which represented 12.9% of the national population (Figure 1; Statistics Poland [GUS], 2021).

**Figure 1.** Students in schools for children and adolescents in the 2020/21 school year (as at 30 September 2021, in percentage)



<sup>a</sup> Including special vocational schools

<sup>b</sup> Including general education arts schools granting professional qualifications

Source: GUS, 2021.

In Poland, enrolment rates are at a high level and by the end of primary school there is no significant difference between girls and boys. Clear differences in choice of educational pathways appear (invariably for many years) at the secondary stage. There are more girls than boys in general secondary schools, while the opposite is true for technical and vocational secondary schools (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Enrolment rates in the 2020/21 school year

Type	Age groups (years)	Total (%)	Men %	Women %
Preschool education	3–6	92.3 (90.1)	92.2 (89.8)	92.4 (90.4)
Primary schools	7–14	95.9 (94.7)	96.5 (95)	95.4 (94.5)
1 <sup>st</sup> degree vocational schools <sup>a</sup>	15–18	15.0 (12.8)	20.0 (17.2)	9.8 (8.2)
General education secondary schools	15–18	52.1 (43)	40.1 (31.4)	64.8 (55.3)
Technical secondary schools <sup>b</sup>	15–19	36.9 (35)	43.1 (41.2)	30.2 (28.4)
Post-secondary schools	19–21	18.5 (4.4)	10.6 (2.5)	26.7 (6.5)

Enrolment rates are a measure of the universality of education. The gross enrolment ratio is the ratio of the number of persons (as at the beginning of the school year) studying at a given level of education (regardless of age) to the population (as at 31 December) in the age group defined as corresponding to that level of education. The net enrolment rate is the ratio of the number of persons (in a given age group) studying (as at the beginning of the school year) at a given level of education to the population (as at 31 December) in the age group defined as corresponding to that level of education. Including: a – special vocational schools, b – general education arts schools granting professional qualifications, c – 2<sup>nd</sup> degree vocational schools.

Source: Own analysis based on the data of GUS, 2021.

## Changes in education in recent years

The years 2018–2022 are the time of implementation of the education reform involving the abolition of junior secondary schools and the introduction of a new core curriculum (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the Core Curriculum for Preschool Education and the Core Curriculum for General Education in Primary Schools, Including for Students with Moderate or Severe Intellectual Disabilities, General Education in 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Vocational Secondary Schools, General Education in Special Vocational Schools and General Education in Post-Secondary Schools [Dz.U. (Journal of Laws) of 2017, item 356]; Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30 January 2018 on the Core Curriculum for General Education in General Secondary Schools, Technical Secondary Schools and 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Vocational Secondary Schools [Dz.U. 2017, items 59, 949 and 2203]; Act of 14 December 2016 – Regulations Introducing the Act – Education Law [Dz.U. 2016, item 60 as amended]). On the first of September 2019, junior secondary schools ceased to function. The return to the school model that was in place before 2000 involved – in addition to the reconstruction of the system – the shortening of general education from 9 to 8 years (the 6+3 option was replaced by a unified eight-year primary school). At the time of preparing this paper, we do not have full data on the actual effects of education in the new model, nor does the Ministry itself present them. However, shortening general education by one year is a step that significantly reduces educational opportunities for an equal start.

The practical implementation of the reform's assumptions proved difficult, as pointed out by the Supreme Audit Office (NIK). The NIK audit showed

that the Minister of National Education in 2016–2018 unthoroughly prepared and implemented changes to the education system. In planning the reform, the financial and organisational consequences of the proposed changes were not reliably assessed (NIK, 2019). Inadequate preparation of schools proved to be a huge problem in the implementation of the reform. Given the pace of the changes, local authorities did not have the capacity to adapt the school infrastructure in time. The cumulation of students of two age groups also proved to be a challenge, when students finishing eighth grade and last graduates of the phased out junior secondary schools were to go to secondary schools at the same time. In total – in the two age groups admitted at the same time – there were more than 705,000 students. In September 2019 secondary schools had to admit nearly 370,000 graduates more. During this period, two separate systems were in place in general and technical secondary schools – for students who had graduated from junior secondary schools and for those who had graduated from an eight-year primary school. The Supreme Audit Office also pointed out that, in connection with the changes to the education system introduced from 1 September 2017, in one-third of schools (34%), teaching conditions had significantly deteriorated and in more than half of establishments (56%), they had not improved. For the two parallel secondary education systems, two different baccalaureate exams were planned. Those who completed their education in the school year 2021/22 took the exam under the old rules. From the 2022/23 school year, the baccalaureate will be conducted according to the new rules, in line with the changes to the core curriculum introduced in 2017. The educational community, parents and students are full of concern about these changes. The exam guidebooks have been published with a significant delay. The first cohort that will be taking the baccalaureate exam in the new formula spent a significant part of the 20/21 school year studying remotely at home (from mid-October 2020 to mid-May 2021). In addition, according to teachers, the new exam is more complicated and more difficult to pass (Suchecka, 2020).

The implementation of the education reform was further complicated and hampered by decisions related to the state of pandemic. The baccalaureate examinations in

2020 – due to the pandemic – were postponed by one month and were held in June. A total of 259,300 secondary school graduates took the exam, 62.1% of whom graduated from general secondary school. In the 2020/21 school year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no oral baccalaureate examination neither in compulsory nor additional subjects. The pass rate for the baccalaureate examination was then at 81.8%. Graduates of general secondary schools succeeded better in the exam conducted under the post-pandemic conditions than graduates of technical schools (respectively, 87.1% and 73.1%). The eighth-grade exam was also postponed due to the state of the epidemic. In 2020, it was conducted in June. From 2021 onwards, the eighth-grade examinations are now held in May.

A significant event for the education system, and strictly speaking for the teaching staff, was the teachers' strike undertaken in 2019. It ended, formally and factually, with the signing of an agreement by the National Education Section of the Solidarity trade union with the then Prime Minister Beata Szydło. The strike, according to the overwhelming majority of striking teachers, was unsuccessful and, for some of them, became one of many reasons to consider leaving the profession (see the "Teacher changes job" [Nauczyciel zmienia pracę] Facebook group). The current staffing situation in education is indeed difficult, with the number of vacancies reaching several thousand nationwide during the school year. Estimating the actual number for the whole country is difficult, as the regional boards of education have stopped publishing data on the total number of teachers needed in each voivodship.

Among the numerous changes we are witnessing in the legal and organisational environment of education, two more are worth mentioning – a change in the professional promotion of teachers and attempts to strengthen the role of the school superintendents. As of 1 September 2022, changes to the professional promotion of teachers are in force. According to them, the first degree of professional promotion of a teacher will become the degree of appointed teacher. It will be possible to apply for it after four years of service. Before that, for 3 years and 9 months, a teacher will no longer serve an internship – as was the case previously – but a preparation for the profession (Ministerstwo



Edukacji i Nauki [MEiN], 2022). This will therefore lengthen the professional development pathway, as well as freeze the possibility for teachers to apply for higher salaries resulting directly from the spreads provided for the different levels of professional promotion. It is estimated that these changes will not contribute to an increased interest in the teaching profession among graduates of pedagogical and teaching courses. Moreover, at the time of preparation of this chapter, the fate of the draft "Lex Czarnek" act is pending in the Polish Parliament. The act would limit the role of parents at schools in deciding how to implement the education and prevention programme and reduce the teachers' autonomy in choosing among the offers to enrich classes implementing the core curriculum (Suchacka, 2022). The draft amendments also limit the competences of the local authorities responsible for the school by introducing a possibility to suspend the headmaster of an institution in the event of an alleged abuse of power, even before disciplinary proceedings are officially initiated. The draft also includes solutions unfavourable to home schooling. In addition, the proposal includes solutions to strengthen the role of the school superintendents. Although these proposed changes were vetoed on 2 March 2022 by the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, they were presented in the Parliament again, this time as a parliamentary draft, and – despite the earlier veto – on 4 November 2022 they were referred for further procedure by the Senate and the President.

## School in the pandemic

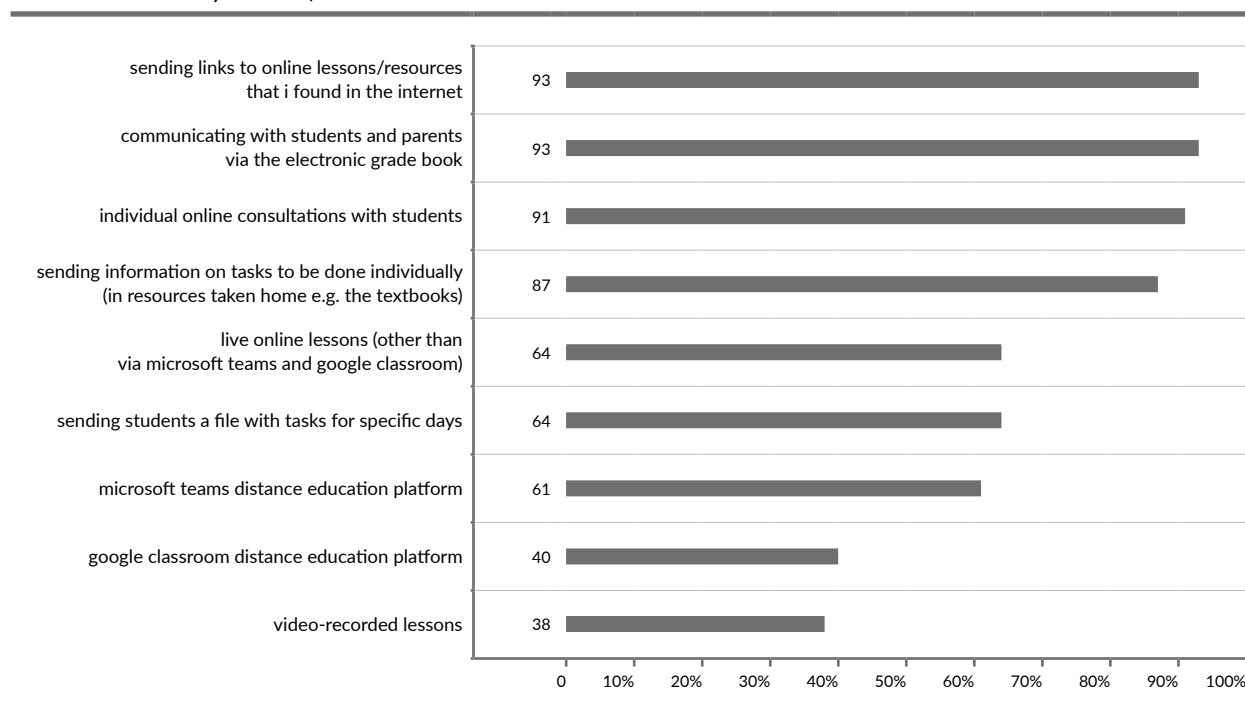
Schools in Poland, like in every other country, were not prepared for any aspect of the COVID19 pandemic. In the first stage, educational institutions were simply closed and then gradually resumed and suspended work. Preschool education and that provided in grades 1–3 of primary school were the least affected in terms of day-to-day functioning. Preschool and early school-age children simply attended classes. This does not mean that the solution adopted was right from the point of view of the epidemic development. Leaving kindergartens and grades 1–3 running basically throughout the pandemic was dictated

by economic realities. Reducing this part of education would have simply required paying benefits to parents and would have had a negative impact on the labour market. In the case of grades 4–8, the situation was different. Ministers of education – as indicated by the NIK – in co-operation with the Minister of Health, the Chief Sanitary Inspector and school superintendents, proposed successive solutions to enable educational establishments to work on site or remotely, but these were not sufficient for a number of reasons. The recommendations and proposals were ad hoc, and often did not take into account the realities of the work of the establishments (maintaining a social distance in kindergartens is simply impossible, as is maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres in the cloakroom of a school with several hundred students). However, it was not the nature of the pandemic-related changes to regulations and guidelines that was most troublesome, but their frequency. According to the NIK, between March 2020 and the end of June 2021, the Ministry of Education drafted 58 regulations, including two key ones – on restricting the operation of educational institutions and specifying the organisation of distance learning. The latter regulation had been amended 28 times by the time the NIK audit was completed (NIK, 2021).

In the first period of the pandemic – which is also confirmed by the findings of the NIK – learning was based on materials transmitted via an electronic grade book – a service provided to schools by commercial entities. In the following months of the pandemic, the diversity of forms and methods of work was greater. It should be noted that, although 85.4% of the teachers surveyed had no experience with any form of distance learning prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, 48% did not have much difficulty in using digital tools. However, 47% of teachers, indicated that preparing lessons in distance education was time-consuming and that this was their main problem in teaching online (Buchner et al., 2020).

At the end of the pandemic, teachers were able to evaluate the methods they used in terms of effectiveness (Figure 2). This assessment is important, as it indicates the directions in which changes in working methods of schools should evolve.

**Figure 2.** Teachers' responses to the question "In retrospect, which of the following forms and methods of distance education that you used, do you consider effective? (primary schools, general secondary schools, technical secondary schools)"



Source: Buchner et al., 2020.

The Supreme Audit Office indicated that training organised for teachers at central level was insufficient. Although a programme entitled *Support for teacher training centres and pedagogical libraries in the fulfilment of tasks related to the preparation and support of teachers in providing distance learning* was launched and 50.5 million PLN was allocated for its implementation, according to the NIK, no teacher was covered by it from August 2020 to April 2021. Trainings for teachers also proved ineffective. Under the project called *Lesson*. Enter it was planned to train by 20 May 2021 75,000 teachers of early primary education, humanities, mathematics and science, arts and IT. Only 11,000 teachers had been successfully trained; 12,000 were in the process of training at the time of the audit (NIK, 2021).

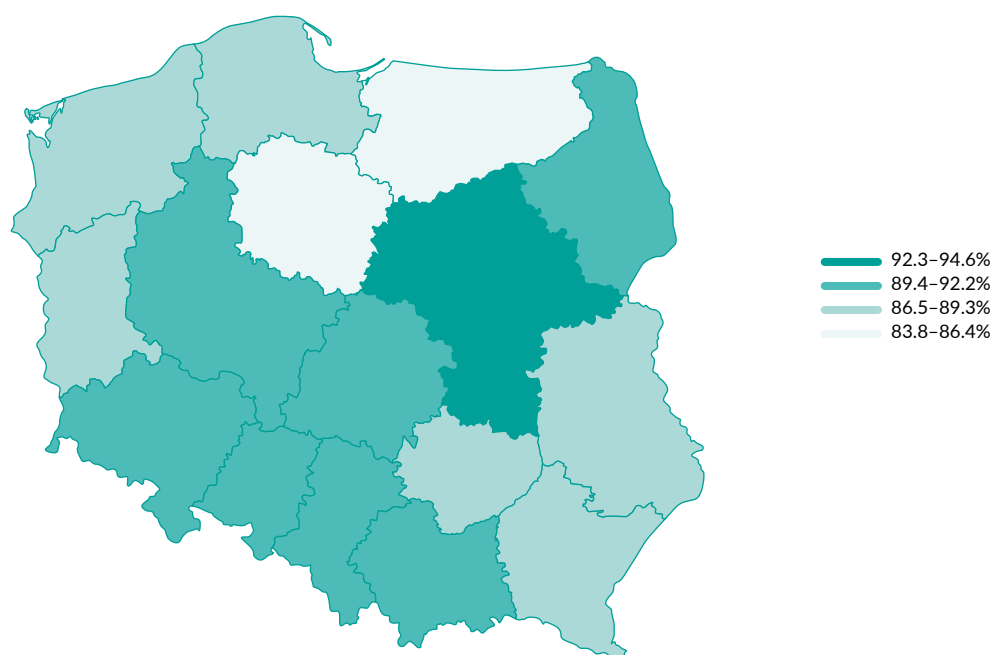
## Preschool education

The 2019 recommendations of the Council of the European Union state that early childhood education and care are essential in laying solid foundations for learning at school and throughout life (Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems [2019/C 189/02]). High quality preschool education is an essential factor to equalise educational opportunities and prepare children for further stages of education. This position is also expressed in the introductory part of the core curriculum for preschool education. Early childhood education is also a proactive measure to improve the functioning and quality of life of the society as a whole. A quality preschool education translates to improved educational attainment and a fewer educational interventions and thus a more economically efficient labour market and a lower cost of subsequent social interventions (European Commission et al., 2018). Research shows that investment

in early childhood education brings real and observable benefits. Children who participated in early childhood education for at least one year scored better in science and mathematics in the PIRLS tests, and the longer they received preschool education, the better their score on the test (Jakubowski and Gajderowicz, 2020).

In 2002 the Council of the European Union set targets for the organisation and provision of childcare. According to these, by 2010, at least 90% of children in the EU between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under 3 years of age should have had access to various forms of formal childcare (European Commission, 2002). This target has not been achieved in many countries within the specified timeframe. However, the rate of children's participation in preschool education is increasing dynamically and Poland can be considered to have achieved the goal of a high share of children in preschool education (Figure 3). This is a direct result of changes to the education law, according to which local authorities are obliged to provide a place for every child whose parents express a desire to participate in preschool education.

**Figure 3.** Preschool education in the 2020/21 school year (as at 30 September 2020 r.). Children aged 3–6 years attending a preschool education establishment as percentage of the total population of children of the same age



Source: GUS, 2021.

The level of children's participation in preschool education from the age of 4 in 2020 was as follows: France had 100% of children in the education system, Spain 97.7% and Norway 97.3%. During the study period, 10 countries ranked higher than Poland in terms of preschool enrolment and 15 had a lower rate (Eurostat, 2022).

Preschool education is the stage in a child's individual educational pathway in which he or she acquires competences related to future learning. Thus, among the kindergarten tasks described in

the core curriculum are the following: supporting the multidirectional activity of the child, creating conditions enabling free development and play in a sense of security, ensuring conditions in which the child will acquire new experiences, supporting the child's independent exploration of the world, strengthening the child's self-esteem, sense of individuality and originality, strengthening independence, preparing the child to understand emotions, their own feelings and the emotions of others, providing opportunities to develop the child's sensitivity, introduction to norms and values, creation of functional networks of cooperation with parents and the environment in which the kindergarten functions, systematic support of the child's learning mechanisms leading to the attainment of a level enabling the child to start school education, introducing the child to the knowledge of the cultural heritage of the country and region, nurturing sensitivity to nature (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 February 2017 on the Core Curriculum for Preschool Education and the Core Curriculum for General Education in Primary Schools, Including for Students with Moderate or Severe Intellectual Disabilities, General Education in 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Vocational Secondary Schools, General Education in Special Vocational Schools and General Education in Post-Secondary Schools [Dz.U. 2017, item 356]). The core curriculum for preschool education is implemented in the areas of physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. All the specific requirements described therein should be achieved by the child by the time they finish the preschool stage of education. It seems, therefore, that the very content of the core curriculum provides a sufficient basis to ensure that life-long learning begins already in kindergarten. However, work practice in kindergartens is often based on the use of pre-packaged worksheets, which encourage rather reproductive work in the kindergarten classroom. Outdoor activities are limited and do not provide opportunities for free exploration. Activities with children outside the kindergarten building have a negligible share in the work plans of the institutions. The project method, which could be successfully used to implement the core curriculum of preschool education, is used to a limited extent. We are therefore faced with a fairly good background in the form of legislation, nevertheless the degree and quality of its implementation remain a challenge<sup>1</sup> (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Number of children attending preschool establishments

School year	Establishments	Total number of children	Of which children with disabilities	Per class
2018/2019	12,535	1,111,595	21,648	20
2019/2020	12,911	1,127,701	–	20
2020/2021	13,214	1,154,430	27,514	20

Source: Own analysis based on: GUS, 2021.

There are still significant differences between urban and rural settings in terms of participation in preschool education (Tables 3 and 4). However, this difference is natural and is due to differences in the size of localities. A much greater differentiation is observed in aggregate figures and in comparisons between voivodships. It is therefore advisable – especially where the level of preschool education is insufficient – to focus on informational and educational activities aimed at children's families.

1 This assessment is based on the author's many years of experience working with preschool establishments, as well as her work in carrying out and organising internships. There is a lack of authoritative research in this area.



**Table 3.** Number of children attending preschool establishments in urban settings

School year	Establishments	Total number of children	Of which children with disabilities	Per class
2018/2019	8,479	840,263	18,108	20
2019/2020	8,756	849,215	–	20
2020/2021	8,979	866,577	23,051	20

Source: Own analysis based on: GUS, 2021.

**Table 4.** Number of children attending preschool establishments in rural areas

School year	Establishments	Total number of children	Of which children with disabilities	Per class
2018/2019	4,056	271,332	3,540	20
2019/2020	4,155	278,486	–	20
2020/2021	4,235	287,873	4,463	19

Source: Own analysis based on: GUS, 2021.

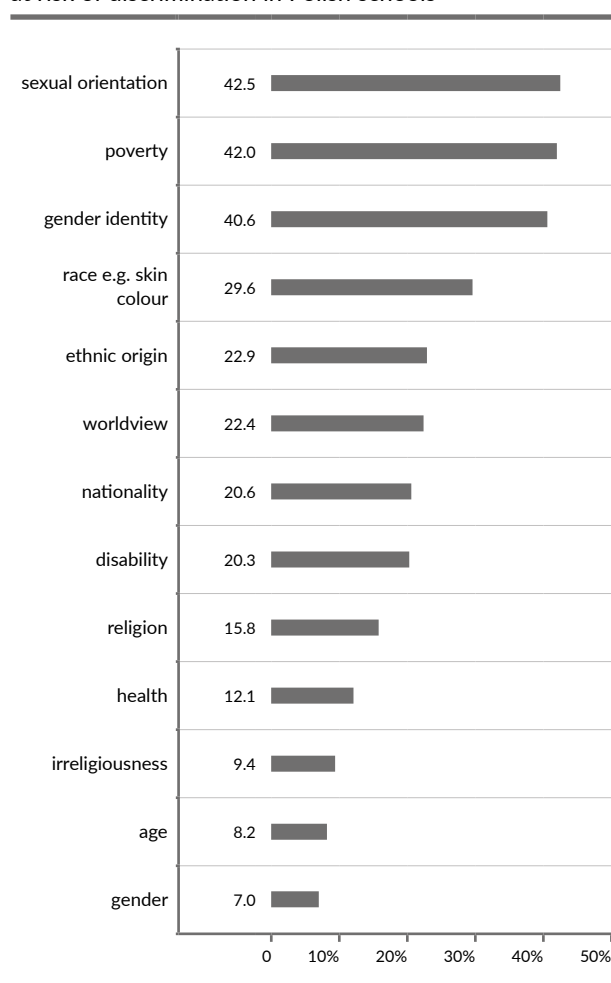
## Acceptance of violence/discrimination – teachers' attitudes

It is important to help students at this stage [the primary school stage – author's note] develop a positive attitude towards learning a modern foreign language and to build an attitude of openness and respect towards the diversity of languages, cultures and nationalities, while supporting the student in building self-esteem and self-confidence. (Dz.U. 2017 item 356, p. 56)

This is an excerpt from the introduction to the core curriculum. According to the Ombudsman for Human Rights (RPO; 2021a), it follows from this and other provisions in the core curriculum that anti-discrimination classes should be an integral part of both the implementation of the core curriculum itself and the education and prevention programmes prepared by the schools. The Ombudsman considers that anti-discrimination education is a school's obligation, which can be derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Dz.U. 1991 No. 120 item 526). Although the Ombudsman refers here to Article 29 of the Convention, it seems, however, that Articles 14, 16 and 17 are also pertinent and that the obligation of schools to carry out anti-discrimination activities also stems from them. In response to the Ombudsman's request to the Minister of Education on this issue, it was assured that the school conducts anti-discrimination education and the Ministry does not see any major difficulties in this area. However, 81% of students are of the opinion that anti-discrimination education should be provided at school and that content related to it should be present both in lessons and in dedicated workshops (RPO, 2021b). It seems, therefore, that contrary to what the Ministry reported, the offer of schools in this respect is insufficient. Also almost 90% of teachers believe that anti-discrimination education should be a compulsory subject in schools. Unfortunately, as the RPO's analysis emphasises, this is currently rather wishful thinking, as there is much to be done also in terms of the preparation of teachers themselves to work on anti-discrimination topics. The vast majority of those surveyed

have never attended any anti-discrimination workshops and only 20% have had the opportunity to take part in a training on equality in the past 5 years (RPO, 2021b).

**Figure 4.** Percentage of respondents who felt that a particular social group is frequently or very frequently at risk of discrimination in Polish schools



Source: RPO, 2021b.

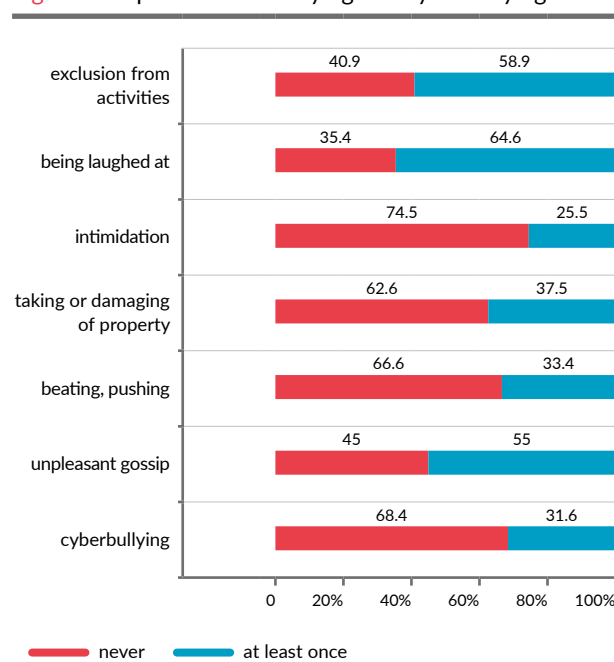
Although anti-discrimination education is considered important by the majority of teachers surveyed, only one in three had attended such workshops during their vocational preparation and in-service training (RPO, 2021b).

What does the readiness to overcome and accept cultural differences in a Polish school actually look like? This was also the subject of an analysis undertaken by the RPO. It turns out that the surveyed students (eighth

grade, representative sample) are definitely willing to accept Ukrainians, Muslims, homosexuals and people with disabilities as fellow students, classmates and members of the school community. Here, however, there are noticeable differences. Homosexuals, followed by Muslims would receive relatively least acceptance by Polish students. In contrast, the highest degree of acceptance was found in the survey towards Ukrainians and people with disabilities (RPO, 2021b).

Contrary to appearances, anti-discrimination and anti-violence education are not separate activities with different goals and content. On the contrary, consciously and directionally conducted activities aimed at reducing discrimination mechanisms contribute to reducing the scale of peer violence at school.

**Figure 5.** Experiences of bullying and cyberbullying



Source: RPO, 2021.

Surveyed students who felt that teachers at their school had more positive attitudes towards different cultures – that is, in practice expressed an attitude of tolerance, acceptance and understanding – were less likely to report bullying by their peers. Students who stated in

the survey that many teachers at their school had a negative attitude towards diversity were more likely to admit that they were sometimes bullied by their colleagues. It is therefore quite clear from the research that an educational environment built on dialogue, understanding and acceptance guarantees a reduced risk of peer victimisation. A factor that influences the reduction of the risk of experiencing peer violence is also the truly functioning school democracy. Students who feel that they have a say in the organisation of school life are less likely to experience bullying and cyberbullying (RPO, 2021b).

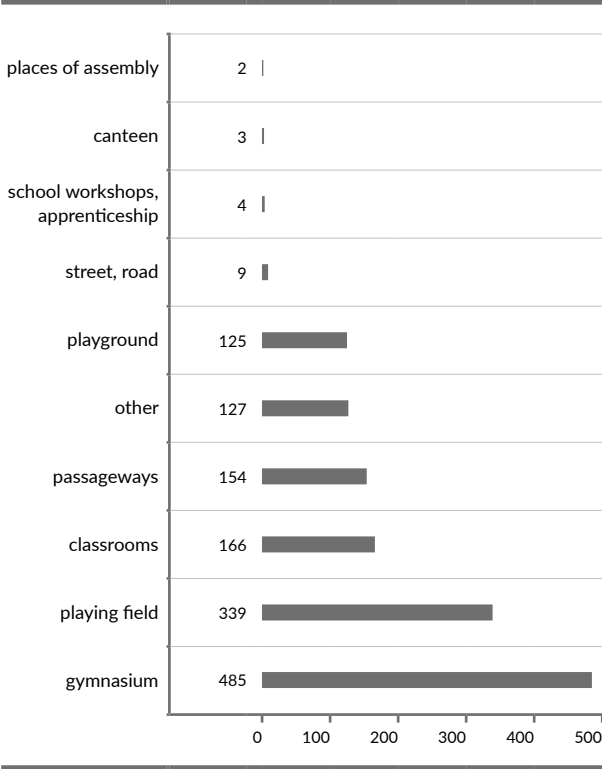
However, according to the author of this chapter and experts from education-related circles (cf. Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Kadry Kierowniczej Oświaty, 2021; Skura, 2021; [www.wolnaskola.org](http://www.wolnaskola.org)), the current actions by the Ministry of Education are aimed at radically limiting the implementation of anti-discrimination classes and co-operation in this field with experts from social organisations.

Safety in schools (accidents, peer victimisation, staff violence)

Safety rules at school are regulated by the provisions of the Act on the Educational System (Dz.U. 1991, No. 95, item 425), the Education Law and – in particular – the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport of 31 December 2002 on Health and Safety in Public and Non-Public Schools and Institutions (Dz.U. 2020, items 1166 and 1386). The headmaster shall immediately notify of any accident that occurs at the school: the parents (caregivers) of the injured person, the occupational health and safety officer, the social labour inspector, the authority in charge of the school or institution and the parents' council. In case of fatal, serious and collective accidents the headmaster immediately notifies the public prosecutor and the school superintendent (Figure 6).

Outreach activities of the Ministry of Education and Science (MEiN) capture the issue of violence in a much broader context than simply arising from the conditions of the physical space and the risks associated with its improper design, construction and operation. School safety is a much broader area – it involves responding to external

Figure 6: Accidents in schools – breakdown by location (2020–2021)



Source: Own analysis based on [otwartedane.gov](http://otwartedane.gov).

threats (such as fires, attacks, explosives, chemical contamination, epidemics and disasters), but also aggressive behaviour, substance use, theft, pornography, inappropriate psychosexual behaviour and criminal acts. MEiN's outreach activities also focus on cybersecurity: access to harmful content, excessive use of multimedia, disinformation, cyberbullying, sexting, image use, copyright infringement and cyberbullying.

On the one hand, the Ministry recognises these threats (MEiN, 2021), on the other – the organisation of additional classes at school, especially those related to the sphere of psychosexual behaviour, is very difficult, and very often simply impossible (Cieślík, 2021). The actual limitations in organising classes also apply to topics such as equality and anti-discrimination education, which help children and young people develop their ability to set boundaries and understand the mechanisms of exclusion and stereotyping processes. Over the years, schools have cooperated in the implementation of their education and prevention

programmes with social organisations specialising in education related to counteracting all forms of abuse to which children and young people can become exposed. These organisations – with adequate expertise and knowledge – together with the headmasters, parents and students helped to implement preventive measures in school establishments. Teachers – no matter how experienced they are – are very often not competent to run activities oriented towards teaching children and young people skills that will help them cope with violence or react quickly to it and ask adults for help.

Incidents at school are thoroughly reported and recorded. The phenomenon of peer victimisation, very often hidden or hardly noticeable, is nevertheless visible at school, but not accompanied by any real and functional systemic solutions or proposals to counteract the problem. Violence is experienced in Poland by 57% of children aged 11–17. Of the five forms of peer victimisation, the largest number of children (42%) have experienced physical assault from other children, 29% have experienced psychological violence, 18% have been involved as a victim in a gang assault, 14% have been a victim of prolonged bullying and 6% have experienced dating violence. Those who experienced peer victimisation were more than three times more likely to self-harm and seven times more likely to attempt suicide (Włodarczyk and Wójcik, 2019). Previous research on violence experienced by children has also indicated that more likely

to experience violence are those children who can not count on much social support and do not have a peer group to stand up for them. These children also tend to have less support from their peers' families and their parents usually have poor contact with teachers and with the school (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, 2014). Other studies show that 27.4% of teenagers surveyed had participated in, and 23.5% had experienced, peer victimisation at school at least once in the two months preceding the survey. Boys are more likely to take part in peer bullying than girls. Among the boys surveyed, 33% had used violence against peers at school at least once. Among girls, this percentage was 21.8% (Malinowska-Cieślak and Małkowska-Szcutnik, 2018).

Cyberbullying is becoming a particularly important issue in educational work. This phenomenon can be particularly difficult to record and therefore to overcome and to prevent. The perpetrator(s) may act anonymously and victims of cyberbullying experience the same consequences in terms of health and psychological wellbeing as victims of bullying. Cyberbullying is usually defined as a series of deliberate aggressive actions against a person who feels they cannot defend themselves. In addition, it is characterised by regularity – the same victim experiences attacks over an extended period of time – and is based on an imbalance of power, perpetrators may be anonymous, act out of surprise and realise that they will harm the victim (Pyżalski, 2019).

**Table 5.** Number of students who have experienced violence at school

Age group			I was bullied at school in the last two months				
			not at all	once or twice	2–3 times a month	once a week	several times a week
Sex	Boys	N	1,843	461	115	53	74
		%	72.4%	18.1%	4.5%	2.1%	2.9%
	Girls	N	2,118	368	70	35	42
		%	80.4%	14.0%	2.7%	1.3%	1.6%
Total		N	3,961	829	185	88	116
		%	76.5%	16.0%	3.6%	1.7%	2.2%

Source: Malinowska-Cieślak i Małkowska-Szcutnik, 2018.

## Curriculum, sex education

Sex education in the form recommended by the WHO is not provided in Poland. The WHO standards assume that classes conducted in accordance with a programme adapted to the age group allow to develop respect for others and oneself, and shape valuable relations and relationships. Contrary to popular belief – as underlined by the WHO – sex education classes do not result in earlier sexual initiation or increase sexual contact. Rather, they help to develop appropriate attitudes and raise awareness about the emotional, physical and social aspects of sexual life. Sex education also has an impact on reducing risky sexual behaviour and, among other things, on reducing the rate of unplanned pregnancies. Furthermore, WHO recognises that adequate preparation in the area of awareness of one's own sexuality is essential to prepare a young person for adulthood so that they understand emotions, feelings, attitudes and values related to reproductive issues (WHO, 2016). The recommendations also state that only schools have the capacity to reach children and young people from all social backgrounds – meaning that schools as institutions, and not the family environment, should be responsible for properly delivered sex education. In addition, the WHO states unequivocally that school headmasters and those responsible for institutional management have a responsibility to ensure that proper sex education is provided before students become sexually active (WHO, 2017).

The Ombudsman for Human Rights intervened in 2019 on the issue of sex education, or rather the lack of it in the Polish education system, stressing that:

the right to receive reliable sex education derives first and foremost from the right to education and also, as the WHO points out, from the right to health protection and access to health-related information. Parents cannot expect all content taught to their children at school to be in line with their worldview (as also confirmed by the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights. In the case of sex education, it is the rights of children that should be prioritised. (RPO, 2019)

Currently, however, sex education in Polish schools is not present in the form of generally accessible classes for children and adolescents, and local authorities that decide to introduce it in line with WHO standards face open criticism from those in power. We also see endeavours to remove sex education from schools altogether through attempts to tighten control over schools (Kazimierczuk, 2022).

Research shows that the percentage of boys and girls who started their sexual life extremely early is decreasing. In 2014, 50% of surveyed boys and 37.8% of girls had had first intercourse at or before the age of 14. In 2018, it was 42.2% of boys and 27.7% of girls. When asked about the age at which they had their first intercourse, girls and boys answered similarly, with girls at 14.2 years and boys at 14.6 years (Izdebski and Wąż, 2018).



## Psychological and pedagogical support

Mood disorders and depression account for about 40% of diagnosed mental disorders in children and adolescents. The others are attention deficits, hyperactivity, behavioural disorders, intellectual disability, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, autism spectrum disorders, schizophrenia and personality disorders. According to a UNICEF analysis, the prevalence of mental disorders in children aged 10–19 in Poland is 10.8%. This amounts to more than 409,000 adolescents (181,000 girls and 228,000 boys). However, these figures are underestimated. This is due to limited access to proper and effective diagnosis of needs and disorders in this matter (UNICEF, 2021). The psycho-physical condition of children and adolescents is deteriorating and this is not a phenomenon observed only in Poland (Twenge, 2019).

In the last two years, an additional trigger for stress, anxiety and mood deterioration was the pandemic and its consequences. For 73% of students, returning to school was associated with additional stress, and 52% communicated only negative emotions in relation to going back to school. Furthermore, 25% of students and 53% of teachers admitted that they expected psychological support (Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej, 2021).

As can be seen from the data, already at the beginning of the pandemic the need to participate in activities developing emotional and social skills increased significantly compared to previous years. At the time of preparing the report, we do not yet have access to the most recent data, however, by following the growth dynamics and other studies on the psycho-physical condition of students, we can assume that the need for organising additional classes to strengthen students' emotional competences will continue to grow (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Students receiving other forms of assistance through psychological and pedagogical classes in primary schools for children and adolescents (excluding special schools)

School year	Therapeutic classes	Didactic-educational classes	Corrective-compensatory classes	Speech therapy classes	Classes developing emotional and social competences
2017/2018	1,117	348,167	196,791	201,552	20,111
2018/2019	1,377	389,290	238,293	214,311	17,935
2019/2020	1,349	263,745	173,185	126,729	46,696
2020/2021	1,223	327,493	218,233	160,554	68,509

Source: Own analysis based on the data of GUS.

In order to meet this challenge, the Ministry of Education and Science introduced new standards for the employment of psychological and pedagogical assistance specialists in Polish schools (Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 9 August 2017 on the Principles of Organising and Providing Psychological and Pedagogical Assistance in Public Kindergartens, Schools and Establishments [Dz.U. 2017 item 1591]; Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of 22 July 2022 on the List of Classes Conducted Directly with or for Students or Children in Care by Teachers of Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centres and Educators, Special Educators, Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Pedagogical Therapists and Career Counsellors [Dz.U. 2022 item 1610]). However, their implementation was postponed, as the timetable for the implementation of the changes seemed impossible from

the very beginning. Unfortunately, the change in standards of the employment of specialists, which was and is necessary, will not solve the problem of the lack of assistance and support for children and adolescents. The working conditions and salaries offered to specialists are not attractive. Already, vacancies for psychologists and educators are the ones that appear more and more frequently in the offer banks at the boards of education.

## Foreign children in schools, including current refugees from Ukraine

A child who does not speak Polish, who comes from a different cultural or religious background or who returns to Poland is also a child who falls into a fairly wide category of students with special educational needs.

Before the war in Ukraine, Polish education system did not commonly face the educational challenge of working with students speaking other languages than Polish and

coming from other cultural backgrounds. Of course, this does not mean that schools have not faced such a task at all. Establishments located at refugee centres or in places where a particular minority resides have had experience of working with culturally and linguistically diverse groups for many years. This has made it possible to define the tasks of an intercultural assistant. The assistants do not need to have a university or pedagogical background, but must speak the language of the child's country of origin. The legislation does not specify the working hours of assistants or the minimum or maximum number of children that would justify the creation of such a position in a school. The employment of an assistant is decided by the school headmaster in agreement with the local authorities in charge of the school.

When analysing the situation of students from minorities, it should be noted that they are not treated equally by the Polish system. Students who have Polish nationality and come from one of the Polish minority groups are provided with their minority language classes (Tables 7 and 8).

**Table 7.** Teaching national and ethnic minority languages and a regional language in primary schools and in inter-school groups for children and adolescents

School year	Total	Belarusian	Kashubian	Lithuanian	German	Ukrainian	Lemko	Slovak
2017/2018	64,772	1,762	16,052	304	44,710	1,237	181	172
2018/2019	70,664	1,757	17,048	363	49,402	1,355	208	164
2019/2020	73,642	1,983	18,868	360	50,267	1,426	232	170
2020/2021	72,933	1,989	18,750	403	48,975	1,948	273	185

Source: GUS, 2021.

**Table 8.** Teaching national and ethnic minority languages and a regional language in secondary schools for adolescents

School year	Total	Belarusian	Kashubian	Lithuanian	German	Ukrainian
2017/2018	2,019	454	1,075	69	139	272
2018/2019	1,909	445	962	67	157	265
2019/2020	2,401	590	1,151	98	171	364
2020/2021	2,417	580	1,149	118	191	324

Source: GUS, 2021.

Compared to previous years, there is a clear trend towards increasing participation in minority language classes. In 2010, there were 1403 participants in such classes in secondary schools, and in 2020/2021 school year already 2,417 participants. A similar upward trend is observed in primary schools. In 2010, regional language classes were attended by 32,372 students, and in 2020 – already 72,933. The increase in the number of students attending classes organised for national and ethnic minorities does not mean that these groups are dynamically growing in numbers – this trend is explained by an increased awareness of children's families and a growing sense of cultural and ethnic identity.

Students who were educated in schools operating in the educational systems of other countries, do not speak the Polish language or speak it at a level insufficient to benefit fully from education in the Polish system, exhibit difficulties in communication and adaptation related to cultural differences or to a change of educational environment, may be educated in preparatory classes, which may also be established between schools. Students from other countries can also join general classes, especially that the limits on the total number of students have been changed. In kindergartens, the maximum group size has been increased by 3 places for children from Ukraine. In grades 1 to 3 of primary school, a class may be enlarged to a maximum of 29 students (§ 7–10, § 11a(1–2) of the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science of 21 March 2022 on the Organisation of Education, Upbringing and Care for Children and Adolescents who are Citizens of Ukraine [Dz.U. 2022, items 645 and 795]. However, no additional solutions have been introduced in the area of intercultural assistants, nor have any additional funds been allocated for their employment.

The number of Ukrainian students who stay in Poland or study in Polish schools is difficult to estimate. Firstly, a student may fulfil their compulsory education outside Poland, in a Ukrainian school through participation in distance learning. Approximately 200,000 children and young people choose this way of continuing their education. Some local authorities decide to create special learning centres for such students (e.g. Warsaw's Centrum Nauki

i Rozwoju), where it is possible to participate in distance classes while having access to Polish-speaking teachers and educators and – what is equally important – to have contact with peers. Secondly, the number of people who study in Polish schools is variable. Conservative estimates indicate that around 200,000 Ukrainian children and adolescents are permanently enrolled in Polish schools.

The vast majority of teachers who currently face the education of students from Ukraine have had little or no experience of working with young people from that country or with other foreigners. More than 55% of them note that all or most Polish students seek contact with children who have come from Ukraine, and almost 60% of teachers note that many students help their new colleagues (Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą, 2022). However, a high willingness to support will not persist indefinitely, with time it can give way to confrontation, defence and hostility/separation. Hence the need for intercultural and anti-discrimination education to be addressed as soon as possible.

The presence of Ukrainian students is a huge challenge for the entire Polish education system. The challenge consists in the obstruction of the systems according to which schools work. This results in particular groups of students having to face additional obstacles, making their education more difficult and limiting their educational opportunities. One of such challenges was the eighth-grade examination taking place in the 2021/22 school year. Ukrainian students who decided to take it were after only a few months of studying in a Polish school. Another challenge is also the lack of work planning possibilities for headmasters related to the variable number of persons entering and leaving the system. Teachers and school communities are also burdened by the work in overcrowded – in line with the regulations – pre-school classes and grades 1–3 and the lack of systemic support in the implementation of educational tasks for Ukrainian students.

## Home schooling

Home education is one of the means of implementing compulsory schooling and preschooling for children and adolescents from 6 to 18 years of age. An application for

pursuing compulsory education in form of homeschooling shall be submitted to the headmaster of the establishment which the child or student attends. The headmaster of the establishment may agree to home education in a given school year. There is no single template of an application for consent to homeschooling, but guidance and supporting documents are available from organisations that support families in carrying out compulsory education in this way. The application should also include a commitment for the child to take end-of-school examinations. A student pursuing compulsory education outside school obtains – just as a student studying at school – annual classification grades on the basis of annual classification examinations covering the part of the core curriculum applicable at a given educational stage. Classification examinations are conducted by the school whose headmaster has authorised the fulfilment of compulsory education outside the school. Such students are not assessed for conduct (Article 37 of the Education Law).

By virtue of the Act of 17 March 2021 amending the Education Law (Dz.U. 2021, item 762), subsections (2)(1) and (2)(2)(a) were deleted from Article 37. This marks a huge change in access to homeschooling. Namely, the change in the legislation removed the requirement to attach to the application an opinion from a psychological and pedagogical counselling centre and levied the division into catchment areas. As at 31 December 2020, homeschooling was pursued by 12,060 students, on 21 March 2021 – 19,966, and on 6 February 2022 – 19,427 students. Thus, it can be seen that the number is clearly increasing, which is probably driven by two factors – the real need for more flexible compulsory education arrangements and the change in legislation that has made it easier to start homeschooling. At the time of writing this chapter, however, the fate of some of the regulations relating to home education is being contested. A group of MPs has submitted, in fact, the government's draft amendments to the Education Law with the intention to restrict and shorten the time during which a transition into home education mode would be possible, setting specific start and end dates (Sejm RP, 2022).

## Student empowerment

The issue of the empowerment of students is one of the most important topics in research in the field of pedagogy. In this chapter, however, we will not focus on analysing the meaning of the notion itself, nor will we reflect on how these meanings are translated into the practice of work in schools and kindergartens. Instead, we will examine the level of empowerment guaranteed to students under the Education Law.

The main document guaranteeing children and adolescents empowerment at school is the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It stipulates the rights of the child, in particular concerning the child's right to respect, to his or her own opinion, to a world view, to fair treatment, and to freedom of expression.

Another document guaranteeing children and young people's right to subjective treatment is the core curriculum, which states that "the school shall provide safe conditions and a friendly atmosphere for learning, taking into account the individual capabilities and educational needs of the student. The most important aim of primary school education is to nurture the integral biological, cognitive, emotional, social and moral development of the student".

Student autonomy is also regulated in the school statutes, a document that is an internal source of law for each establishment. Under Article 98(1)(17) of the Education Law, the statutes detail the rights

and duties of pupils. Although in theory the school statutes may not violate the students' rights, it nevertheless appears that in practice the empowerment of students is often compromised<sup>2</sup>.

The institution that guarantees the realisation of the students' rights at school is the student board (Article 85 of the Education Law). The student board is made of all students of the school who elect representatives from among themselves. Each student should be able to propose and implement their ideas for activities or events within the student board (if, of course, they do not conflict with the school statutes or the law). The student council is not obliged to carry out any tasks assigned by the school management, but this does not mean that it functions 'alongside' or 'against' the management or the teaching staff. The student council is autonomous in the school, and one of its main tasks should be to identify the needs of the school's students and to meet them – according to the possibilities and resources.

## Summary

What should be emphasised in conclusion of this chapter is the great success of Polish preschool education. As far as the rate of children's participation in this form of education is concerned, the assumptions of dynamic growth have been realised, and the core curriculum itself is the basis for conducting early childhood education at a high quality level. What remains a challenge though is the working style and the way teachers are trained. Appropriately prepared strategies and solutions at the level of education and vocational training of preschool teachers would certainly allow early childhood education to become an effective element in the policy of equalising educational opportunities.

It seems that the Polish education system – like education systems all over the world – is in a situation where a higher necessity is not so much to maintain the system itself, but to look for solutions to its growing problems and challenges. The main areas of intervention and reform should be aspects related to the psycho-physical condition of students and the need to transform the model and the way schools work (here the pandemic proved to be a critical test). Unfortunately, the attempts at reform made by those in power in recent years have not addressed any of these problems, and what is more, they contribute to deepening of crisis in another area of Polish education, namely the shortage of teachers.

---

2 Cf. <https://umarlestatuty.pl/> and <https://kogutorium.org/>.



## References

- Buchner, A., Majchrzak, M., Wierzbicka, M. (2020). *Edukacja zdalna w czasie pandemii. Edycja I*. Centrum Cyfrowe. Pobrane z: [https://centrumcyfrowe.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2020/05/Edukacja\\_zdalna\\_w\\_czasie\\_pandemii.pptx-2.pdf](https://centrumcyfrowe.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2020/05/Edukacja_zdalna_w_czasie_pandemii.pptx-2.pdf)
- Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej. (2021). *Szkoła ponownie, czy szkoła od nowa. Jak wygląda powrót do edukacji stacjonarnej*. Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej.
- Cieślik, A. (2021, 26 listopada). "Będziemy się temu sprzeciwiać". Czarnek o programie Zdrowe Love. *Interia*. <https://wydarzenia.interia.pl/kraj/news-bedziemy-sie-temu-sprzeciwia-czarnek-o-programie-zdrowe-lov,nld,5669970>
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Lenaerts, K., Vandenbroeck, M., Beblavý, M. (2018). *Benefits of early childhood education and care and the conditions for obtaining them*. Publications Office. Pobrane z: <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/20810>
- European Commission. (2002). *Presidency conclusions Barcelona European Council 15 and 16 March 2002*. European Commission. Press and Communication Service. Pobrane z: [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/69871.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/69871.pdf)
- Eurostat. (2022). *Pupils from age 4 to the starting age of compulsory education at primary level, by sex – as % of the population of the corresponding age group*. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/EDUC\\_UOE\\_ENRA10\\_\\_custom\\_868517/bookmark/map?lang=en&bookmarkId=103e5ce9-ef18-4d3d-8f-fa-f7d8570c16f1](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/EDUC_UOE_ENRA10__custom_868517/bookmark/map?lang=en&bookmarkId=103e5ce9-ef18-4d3d-8f-fa-f7d8570c16f1)
- Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą. (2022). *Razem w klasie. Dzieci z Ukrainy w polskich szkołach*. Fundacja Szkoła z Klasą. Pobrane z: [https://www.szkolazklasa.org.pl/?smd\\_process\\_download=1&download\\_id=11878](https://www.szkolazklasa.org.pl/?smd_process_download=1&download_id=11878)
- GUS. (2018). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2017/2018*. Główny Urząd Statystyczny.
- GUS. (2019). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2018/2019*. Główny Urząd Statystyczny.
- GUS. (2020). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2019/2020*. Główny Urząd Statystyczny.
- GUS. (2021). *Oświata i wychowanie w roku szkolnym 2020/21*. Główny Urząd Statystyczny.
- Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych. (2014). *Przemoc w polskiej szkole – jak naprawdę wygląda*. <https://www.ibe.edu.pl/pl/babel/11-media/aktualnosci-prasowe/381-przemoc-w-polskiej-szkole-jak-naprawde-wyglada>
- Izdebski, Z., Wąż, K. (2018). Aktywność seksualna młodzieży 15-letniej. In: J. Mazur, A. Małkowska-Szcutnik (ed.), *Zdrowie uczniów w 2018 roku na tle nowego modelu badań HBSC* (p. 143–149). Instytut Matki i Dziecka.
- Jakubowski, M., Gajderowicz, T. (2020). *Co potrafią polscy czwartoklasiści. Wyniki badania TIMMS 2019*. Evidence Institute. Pobrane z: <https://www.evidin.pl/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/POLICY-NOTE-1-2020-TIMSS-1.pdf>
- Kazimierzczuk, A. (2022, 17 stycznia). Przemysław Czarnek: W szkole jest już edukacja seksualna. *Rzeczpospolita*. <https://edukacja.rp.pl/edukacja/art19295401-przemyslaw-czarnek-w-szkole-jest-juz-edukacja-seksualna>
- Malinowska-Cieślik, M., Małkowska-Szcutnik, A. (2018). Przemoc w szkole (bullying). In: J. Mazur, A. Małkowska-Szcutnik (ed.), *Zdrowie uczniów w 2018 roku na tle nowego modelu badań HBSC* (p. 150–155). Instytut Matki i Dziecka.

- MEiN. (2021). *Bezpieczna szkoła. Zagrożenia i zalecane działania profilaktyczne w zakresie bezpieczeństwa fizycznego i cyfrowego uczniów – poradnik MEN*. Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki. <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka/bezpieczenstwo-fizyczne-i-cyfrowe-uczniow--poradnik-men>
- MEiN. (2022). *Wdrażanie nowego systemu awansu zawodowego nauczycieli w świetle przepisów przejściowych*. Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki. <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka/wdrazanie-nowego-systemu-awansu-zawodowego-nauczycieli-w-swietle-przepisow-przejsciowych>
- NIK. (2019). *Zmiany w systemie oświaty. Informacja o wynikach kontroli*. Najwyższa Izba Kontroli.
- NIK. (2021). *O organizacji pracy nauczycieli w szkołach publicznych – część I*. Najwyższa Izba Kontroli. <https://www.nik.gov.pl/aktualnosci/nik-o-organizacji-pracy-nauczycieli-w-szkolach-publicznych-czesc-i.html>
- Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Kadry Kierowniczej Oświaty. (2021). *Stanowisko OSKKO ws. rządowych założeń zmian w prawie oświatowym*. <https://www.oskko.edu.pl/stanowisko-ws-zmian-prawa-oswiatowego/index.html>
- Pyżalski, J. (2019). Elektroniczna przemoc rówieśnicza (cyberprzemoc). In: J. Pyżalski, A. Zdrodowska, Ł. Tomczyk, K. Abramczuk, *Polskie badanie EU Kids Online 2018* (p. 101–118). Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- RPO. (2019). *Mity i fakty na temat edukacji seksualnej z perspektywy RPO*. Biuletyn Informacji Publicznej RPO. <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/mity-i-fakty-na-temat-edukacji-seksualnej-z-perspektywy-rpo>
- RPO. (2021a). *Stanowisko RPO z dnia 1 marca 2021 r.* <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/rpo-do-mein-o-koniecznosci-edukacji-antydiskryminacyjnej>
- RPO. (2021b). *Równe traktowanie w szkole. Raport z badania w szkołach oraz analiza ilościowa programów wychowawczo-profilaktycznych*. Biuro Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich.
- Sejm RP. (2022). Projekt z dnia 20 października 2022 r. Pobrane z: [https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki9ka.nsf/Projekty/9-020-1049-2022/\\$file/9-020-1049-2022.pdf](https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki9ka.nsf/Projekty/9-020-1049-2022/$file/9-020-1049-2022.pdf)
- Skura, P. (2021, 18 sierpnia). ZNP: "Lex Czarnek" narusza obecny ustrój szkolny. Opinia negatywna! *Głos Nauczycielski*. <https://glos.pl/zn-p-lex-czarnek-narusza-obecny-ustroj-szkolny>
- Suchecka, J. (2020, 12 lutego). Matura będzie trudniejsza. "Istotne podniesienie poprzeczki". *TVN24.pl*. <https://tvn24.pl/polska/matura-w-2023-roku-bedzie-trudniejsza-3967606>
- Suchecka, J. (2022). Czarnek znowu w Sejmie. "Ten projekt powinien spłonąć ze wstydu". *TVN24.pl*. <https://tvn24.pl/polska/lex-czarnek-znowu-w-sejmie-ten-projekt-powinien-splonac-ze-wstydu-5590044>
- Twenge, J. (2019). *iGen. Dlaczego dzieciaki dorastające w sieci są mniej zbuntowane, bardziej tolerancyjne i mniej szczęśliwe – oraz zupełnie nieprzygotowane do dorosłości – i co to oznacza dla nas wszystkich*. Smak Słowa.
- UNICEF. (2021). *The State of the World's Children 2021: On My Mind – Promoting, protecting and caring for children's mental health*. United Nations Children's Fund.
- WHO. (2016). *Sexuality Education: What it its impact. Policy brief, No 2*. World Health Organization. Pobrane z: [https://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/379045/Sexuality\\_education\\_Policy\\_brief\\_No\\_2.pdf](https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/379045/Sexuality_education_Policy_brief_No_2.pdf)
- WHO. (2017). *Why should sexuality education be delivered in school-based settings. Policy brief, No 4*. World Health Organization. Pobrane z: [https://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/379050/BZgA\\_Policy\\_Brief\\_4\\_FINAL\\_EN.pdf](https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/379050/BZgA_Policy_Brief_4_FINAL_EN.pdf)
- Włodarczyk, J., Wójcik, S. (2019). Skala i uwarunkowania przemocy rówieśniczej. Wyniki Ogólnopolskiej diagnozy krzywdzenia dzieci w Polsce. *Dziecko Krzywdzone. Teoria, badania, praktyka*, 18(3), 9–35.

## Legal references

Konwencja o prawach dziecka przyjęta przez Zgromadzenie Ogólne Narodów Zjednoczonych dnia 20 listopada 1989 r. (Dz.U. z 1991 r. Nr 120 poz. 526). (Convention on the rights of the child)

Obwieszczenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 9 lipca 2020 r. w sprawie ogłoszenia jednolitego tekstu rozporządzenia Ministra Edukacji Narodowej w sprawie warunków organizowania kształcenia, wychowania i opieki dla dzieci i młodzieży niepełnosprawnych, niedostosowanych społecznie i zagrożonych niedostosowaniem społecznym (Dz.U. 2017 poz. 1578). (Announcement of the Minister of National Education on the publication of a consolidated text of the Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the conditions for organising education, upbringing and care for children and young people with disabilities, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment)

Rozporządzeniu Ministra Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu z dnia 31 grudnia 2002 r. w sprawie bezpieczeństwa i higieny w publicznych i niepublicznych szkołach i placówkach (Dz.U. z 2020 r. poz. 1166 i 1386). (Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sport on safety and hygiene in public and non-public schools and other educational institutions)

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 14 lutego 2017 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły podstawowej, w tym dla uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu umiarkowanym lub znacznym, kształcenia ogólnego dla branżowej szkoły I stopnia, kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły specjalnej przysposabiającej do pracy oraz kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły policealnej (Dz.U. z 2017 r. poz. 356). (Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the core curriculum for preschool education and the core curriculum for general education in primary schools, including for pupils with a moderate or severe intellectual disability, general education in stage I sectoral vocational schools, general education in special schools preparing for employment, and general education in post-secondary schools)

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 9 sierpnia 2017 r. w sprawie zasad organizacji i udzielania pomocy psychologiczno-pedagogicznej w publicznych przedszkolach, szkołach i placówkach (Dz.U. z 2017 r. poz. 1591). (Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the organisation and provision of psychological and educational support in public nursery schools, schools and other educational institutions)

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 30 stycznia 2018 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, technikum oraz branżowej szkoły II stopnia (Dz.U. z 2017 r. poz. 59, 949 i 2203) (Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the core curriculum for general education for general upper secondary schools, technical secondary schools and stage II sectoral vocational schools)

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji i Nauki z dnia 21 marca 2022 r. w sprawie organizacji kształcenia, wychowania i opieki dzieci i młodzieży będących obywatelami Ukrainy (Dz.U. z 2022 r.; poz. 645 i 795) (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science on the organisation of education, upbringing and care of children and youth who are citizens of Ukraine)

Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji i Nauki z dnia 22 lipca 2022 r. w sprawie wykazu zajęć prowadzonych bezpośrednio z uczniami lub wychowankami albo na ich rzecz przez nauczycieli poradni psychologiczno-pedagogicznych oraz nauczycieli: pedagogów, pedagogów specjalnych, psychologów,

logopedów, terapeutów pedagogicznych i doradców zawodowych (Dz.U. z 2022 r. poz. 1610) (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science on the list of classes conducted directly with pupils by teachers from counselling and guidance centres and teachers: pedagogues, special educators, psychologists, speech therapists, pedagogical therapists and career counsellors)

Ustawa z dnia 7 września 1991 r. o systemie oświaty (Dz.U. 1991 Nr 95 poz. 425). (Act on school education)

Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. Przepisy wprowadzającej ustawę – Prawo oświatowe (Dz.U. z 2016 r. poz. 60 ze zm.) (Act on provisions introducing the Law on School Education)

EU Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems (2019/C 189/02).

#### Citation:

Kazmierczyk, I. (2022). Education of children in Poland – selected aspects. In: M. Sajkowska, R. Szredzińska (ed.), *Children Count 2022. Report on risks to children's safety and development in Poland* (pp. 216–237). Empowering Children Foundation.



This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial–NoDerivs 3.0 Poland license.

English edition of the Report prepared in partnership with UNICEF



Polish version of the Report prepared with financial support from the Justice Fund, at disposal of the Ministry of Justice



Sfinansowano ze środków Funduszu Sprawiedliwości, którego dysponentem jest Minister Sprawiedliwości