

European Charter for Democratic Schools without Violence

Strasbourg, 16 July 2004

Introduction

Upon the initiative of the Council of Europe, young people from across Europe have prepared the European Charter for Democratic Schools without Violence on the basis of the fundamental values and principles shared by all Europeans, in particular those set forth in the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

This group of young people recommends that schools throughout Europe seriously consider using this Charter as a model with which to further the cause of democratic schooling without violence.

Bearing in mind the differences in Europe's education systems, the Charter can be either adopted as it stands, or it can be adapted and further strengthened by the various school communities, while preserving its spirit and general principles.

An explanatory memorandum will accompany this Charter, providing examples and explanations to facilitate its implementation.

European Charter for Democratic Schools without Violence

1. All members of the school community have the right to a safe and peaceful school. Everybody has the responsibility to contribute to creating a positive and inspiring environment for learning and personal development.
2. Everybody has the right to equal treatment and respect regardless of any personal difference. Everyone enjoys freedom of speech without risking discrimination and repression.
3. The school community ensures that everybody is aware of their rights and responsibilities.
4. Every democratic school has a democratically elected decision making body composed of representatives of students, teachers, parents, and other

members of the school community where appropriate. All member of this body have the right to vote.

5. In a democratic school, conflicts are resolved in a non-violent and constructive way in partnership with all members of the school community. Every school has a staff and students trained to prevent and solve conflicts through counseling and mediation.
6. Every case of violence is investigated and dealt with promptly, and followed through irrespective whether students or any other members of the school community are involved.
7. School is a part of the local community. Co-operation and exchange of information with local partners are essential for preventing and solving problems.