



## The Effectiveness of Bullying Prevention Strategies: implementation and Impact in Junior High Schools

Ach. Baidowi<sup>1\*</sup>, Ricky Ahmad Fahrezi<sup>2</sup>, Lamy Hayatina<sup>3</sup>, Mega Suteki<sup>4</sup>, Hilmi Qosim Mubah<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> STAI Publisistik Thawalib Jakarta, Indonesia; e-mail: [ach\\_baidowi@stathawalib.ac.id](mailto:ach_baidowi@stathawalib.ac.id)

<sup>2</sup> STAI Publisistik Thawalib Jakarta, Indonesia; e-mail: [Fahrexirickiahmad272@gmail.com](mailto:Fahrexirickiahmad272@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Fatahillah, Indonesia; e-mail: [hayatinalamy@gmail.com](mailto:hayatinalamy@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> Universitas Musamus Merauke, Indonesia; e-mail: [megasuteki@unmus.ac.id](mailto:megasuteki@unmus.ac.id)

<sup>5</sup> Institut Agama Islam Negeri Madura, Indonesia; e-mail: [hilmiqosimmubah@iainmadura.ac.id](mailto:hilmiqosimmubah@iainmadura.ac.id)

\* Corresponding author: [ach\\_baidowi@stathawalib.ac.id](mailto:ach_baidowi@stathawalib.ac.id)

**Abstract.** In 2023, bullying cases in Indonesia reached 16,720 incidents, with significant physical and psychological impacts. Bullying negatively affects the emotional well-being of victims, with risks of depression, social isolation, and decreased academic performance. This study aims to analyze bullying prevention programs in schools and their impact on students and schools. The research method employed is qualitative case study, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis involved condensation, presentation, and conclusion. The findings reveal that bullying prevention programs were implemented through routine socialization, counseling, and religious education to reinforce values of empathy and respect among students. Parental involvement in parenting programs and the enforcement of strict rules strengthened the synergy between schools and families. Creative approaches, such as educational drama and anti-bullying videos, raised awareness of the consequences of bullying. As a result, there was a significant decrease in bullying behaviors, an increase in student participation in positive activities, and more harmonious social relationships, creating a more conducive school climate for learning. In conclusion, the bullying prevention program was proven to be effective in creating a safe and comfortable school environment.

**Keywords:** Academic Performance; Bullying Prevention; Emotional Well-being; Schools; Students.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The bullying cases in Indonesian schools during 2023 show a concerning trend. The National Commission for Child Protection (Komnas PA) reported at least 16,720 bullying cases in various schools across Indonesia throughout the year (Komnas PA, 2023). The bullying incidents varied, ranging from mockery, seniority issues, to performance-related problems, with some cases leading to serious physical and psychological impacts. For example, a student in Temanggung set his school on fire due to the pressure of the bullying he had experienced (Vir dhani, 2023). In Gresik, a primary school student went blind after being repeatedly stabbed with meatballs by a senior student, while a student in Bekasi died after suffering bullying that led to injuries and bone cancer (Vir dhani, 2023). A similar case occurred in Balikpapan, where the victim endured physical violence in a mosque environment, and in Asahan, North Sumatra, a student was beaten by six perpetrators, resulting in severe trauma (Ariyanto, 2023). These cases highlight the urgency of child protection in school environments.

Bullying in schools has far-reaching effects on both the victims and the perpetrators, affecting them psychologically, socially, and academically. Victims of bullying are at high risk of experiencing anxiety, depression, and long-term mental health disorders (Le et al., 2019; Lin et al., 2020), and are more likely to contemplate or commit suicide compared to non-bullied

students (Eyuboglu et al., 2021). Additionally, victims often face social isolation, which worsens feelings of loneliness and decreases emotional well-being and they may develop antisocial behaviors such as aggression and criminality later in life (Bias, 2016). Children with disabilities or physical, racial, or ethnic differences are more vulnerable to being targeted by bullying (Ahmed et al., 2022). Forms of bullying include physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying, all of which have negative impacts (Yang et al., 2018). Bullying perpetrators are also at risk of experiencing negative life outcomes and engaging in criminal behavior (Lickona, 2016). A positive school climate and comprehensive prevention programs can reduce the impact of bullying (Gloppen et al., 2017; Sirin, 2022; Healy et al., 2022). The impact of bullying is also seen in the decline of academic performance and student engagement in school (Yang et al., 2018).

Preventing bullying in schools is critically important due to its broad effects on students' physical and mental health, including academic decline, psychological problems, and the risk of suicide (Zhang & Chen, 2020; Yosep et al., 2023). The negative consequences of bullying are not limited to the school years but can persist into adulthood, triggering mental health disorders and social difficulties (Tomescu, 2024). A safe and conducive school environment is necessary, and prevention programs must involve the entire school community, including training for teachers and staff (Letendre et al., 2016). A systemic approach involving schools, families, communities, and authorities has proven to be more effective (Hornby, 2016). The physical environment of schools, such as layout and security, also influences bullying behavior (Francis et al., 2022). Technological innovations, such as IoT sensors and voice recognition, can aid in early detection (XiNuo et al., 2024). Family interventions and approaches tailored to specific types of bullying are essential for addressing this issue, and regular evaluations are needed to ensure the continued effectiveness of programs (Healy et al., 2022; Ramirez et al., 2023; Devlin et al., 2018).

Research on bullying prevention strategies in schools has identified several effective approaches. Evidence-based programs, such as the Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP), KiVa, and Steps to Respect, have been shown to reduce bullying by focusing on social-emotional learning, conflict resolution, and emotion management (Shetgiri et al., 2015). Comprehensive approaches involving students, teachers, parents, and the community are also more effective than short-term or isolated models (Carney & Hazier, 2016). Improving the school climate to create a safe and supportive environment for students is crucial (Swearer et al., 2020). Active involvement from teachers and parents, including teacher training to recognize and intervene in bullying situations, is also essential (Chen & Chen, 2018). However,

challenges such as a lack of clear policies, limited training, and insufficient resources can hinder the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs (Salimi et al., 2021).

This study identifies a gap in more structured and community-based bullying prevention approaches at the junior high school level, particularly at Al Wafa Setu Junior High School in Bekasi. The uniqueness of this study lies in its implementation of strategies that involve all school and community elements, with an emphasis on educational, religious value-based, and collaborative approaches between school leaders, teachers, students, and parents. The main objective of the research is to analyze the effectiveness of systematic and sustainable bullying prevention strategies in the school environment, as well as their positive impact on the school climate, student interactions, and a reduction in bullying cases. The findings of this study suggest that active involvement from all parties in monitoring and periodic evaluations, as well as comprehensive control over all areas of the school, can improve students' social behavior and create a more positive school culture. The impact of this research is to provide a comprehensive bullying prevention strategy model that can be applied in other schools with similar success.

## 2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method with a case study approach, as it requires in-depth and detailed analysis. The research was conducted at Al Wafa Setu Junior High School, located at Jl. Masjid Umar Bin Khattab No. 01, Dusun II, Kp. Cisaat Bojong, Desa Kertarahayu, Setu, Kabupaten Bekasi, West Java. The research subjects included the Principal, the Vice Principal of Student Affairs, one Guidance Counselor, one class teacher, and three students from grades 1, 2, and 3. The data collection framework is as follows:

**Table 1.** Data Collection on Bullying Prevention at Al Wafa Setu Junior High School, Bekasi

No.	Strategy Aspect	Data Collection Technique	Purpose / Description
1.	Bullying Prevention Program at Al Wafa Setu Junior High School	Interviews, Observation, Documentation	Collect data regarding the implementation of the bullying prevention program, such as socialization and education activities, individual/group counseling, Islamic education, parenting programs, creation of anti-bullying rules, and creativity-based approaches. The aim is to understand the form, implementation, and effectiveness of the program at the school.
2.	Control of Bullying Prevention Program at Al Wafa Setu Junior High School	Interviews & Documentation	Gather information about the monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up processes carried out by the school to ensure the program runs effectively and sustainably.
3.	Impact of Bullying Prevention Program at Al Wafa Setu Junior High School	Interviews & Observation	Understand the impact of the program's implementation on student behavior, the school atmosphere, social interactions among students, and the reduction in bullying cases.

To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of techniques was employed using multiple data collection methods that complement each other, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. This approach aims to ensure that the information obtained is unbiased and reliable. Additionally, source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from different sources, such as the Principal, Vice Principal of Student Affairs, Guidance Counselor, class teacher, and students. By comparing information from various sources, the researcher ensures that the data collected is consistent and valid, thus improving the accuracy of the study results.

Confirmability was also ensured to verify that the research findings genuinely stem from the data and facts in the field, rather than the researcher's interpretation or opinion. In this study, confirmability was achieved by keeping field notes, interview transcripts, photo/video documentation, and cross-checking the findings with data sources to ensure that the research conclusions are credible and accountable.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The bullying prevention strategies and programs at Al Wafa Setu Junior High School in Bekasi are a shared responsibility among all elements of the school, especially the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, guidance counselors, subject teachers, staff, and class advisors, with the principal playing the leading role in formulating, implementing, and supervising the program. The approach applied is educational, preventive, collaborative, and participatory, emphasizing the collective responsibility of the entire school community so that the prevention efforts do not become the burden of an individual or a specific department. The program aims to create a safe, comfortable, and conducive learning environment, raise collective awareness about the dangers of bullying, strengthen healthy social relationships among students, and instill moral and spiritual values for character development. Through the involvement of all school members, it is hoped that a culture of mutual respect, appreciation, and care will emerge, thus preventing bullying and creating a more harmonious learning atmosphere. The bullying prevention efforts at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi are outlined as follows:

#### **Anti-Bullying Socialization and Education at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi**

The routine socialization and education program for bullying prevention at SMP Al Wafa Setu, Bekasi, is carried out periodically every three months, involving students, teachers, and parents. The purpose of this activity is to increase understanding among all members of the school community about the forms of bullying, the negative impacts it causes, and the

prevention measures that can be taken. The socialization material is presented by the guidance counselor and the vice principal for student affairs, with guest speakers or activists who are competent in the fields of child protection and anti-bullying. The guest speakers rotate on a scheduled basis to maintain variety and quality in education, ensuring the topics remain relevant and engaging for the participants. This socialization is reinforced through seminars and thematic studies regularly held in various areas of the school, such as the hall, mosque, or classrooms. The goal is to instill values of empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect among students.

The bullying prevention education is also introduced during the School Environmental Introduction activities for new students. During this phase, students are given basic understanding about the importance of respecting others, maintaining friends' feelings, and understanding the negative consequences of bullying behavior. Furthermore, the school holds an anti-bullying seminar with expert speakers to broaden students' perspectives and provide real strategies for preventing bullying in the school environment. Teachers also play an active role in delivering advice and reinforcing character development during classroom learning to reduce the habits of mocking, insulting, or belittling others.

Providing comprehensive knowledge and strategies about bullying to teachers is crucial. Teachers need to continue professional development to enhance their efficacy in handling bullying (Wei et al., 2024). Online training programs for teachers and parents have also been proven effective, focusing on increasing respect for diversity, empathy, and social skill development (Díaz-Caneja et al., 2021). Additionally, social-emotional learning (SEL) interventions show significant effectiveness in reducing bullying by improving students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to bullying. Ecological models for bullying prevention that involve various levels, such as teachers, schools, communities, and society, have proven to strengthen bullying prevention efforts (Silva et al., 2017). Specific interventions for at-risk populations, such as peer mentoring and social skills training, can also provide moderate results in reducing bullying.

### **Anti-Bullying Counseling at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi**

The guidance and counseling (BK) activities at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi play a crucial role in the prevention and handling of bullying cases in the school environment. The guidance counselor routinely identifies social relationships among students using social observation instruments every six months to map potential bullying perpetrators and victims. The BK program includes individual and group counseling services, where students are given the opportunity to share and express their personal experiences in a safe and open environment.

Additionally, the guidance counselor applies interpersonal approaches that help build trust between teachers and students, making students feel more comfortable reporting if they experience or witness bullying. Reflective activities such as writing personal notes or stories about bullying encourage students to recognize empathy, understand the emotional impact of bullying, and develop self-awareness to avoid engaging in harmful behaviors toward peers.

Effective anti-bullying counseling models include various approaches that have been shown to reduce bullying in schools. One such model is the Confronter Model, which involves creating an agreement letter, inviting parents/guardians, and home visits, making the victims feel empowered and safer from potential perpetrators (Awad & Wekke, 2017). Additionally, Group Counseling with Role-Play Techniques using the principle of "compassion" in roles played by students has been proven effective in preventing verbal bullying in junior high schools (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Another approach, Knowledge-Attitude-Practice-Based Educational Intervention, which includes four educational sessions, significantly increases students' awareness of bullying and reduces various forms of violence, including cyberbullying, social bullying, and verbal bullying (Peng et al., 2022). Finally, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), which is comprehensive and applied throughout the school, has shown positive impacts in reducing bullying and improving friendships, although its effectiveness may vary depending on the environment (Sullivan et al., 2021).

### **Islamic Religious Education Anti-Bullying Program at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi**

Islamic Religious Education at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi is designed to instill moral and spiritual values as the foundation for student character, particularly in preventing bullying behavior. Teachers incorporate advice and anti-violence values into every learning process, ensuring that students not only understand religious teachings theoretically but also apply them in their everyday social interactions. Additionally, the school utilizes the mosque and various religious activities as moral education media, providing direct experiences about the importance of good character and mutual respect. This program emphasizes the strengthening of manners, morals, and social responsibility as the main strategies for preventing harmful behavior toward peers. Each session is complemented by reinforcing moral and religious values and thematic studies on the social and moral impact of bullying, enabling students to understand the negative consequences of bullying. With this approach, religious education becomes an effective tool in shaping a generation that is empathetic and displays positive behavior.

Islamic Religious Education plays a key role in bullying prevention by integrating Islamic teachings into character development. One program implemented is Ta'awun, which aims to

reduce bullying behavior through Islam-based training. This program involves a pretest-posttest to measure students' understanding of bullying and the creation of anti-bullying posters, encouraging students to become anti-bullying ambassadors. In addition, preventive steps such as the fun cottage movement, conflict and emotion management training, and regular anti-bullying and cyberbullying education are also implemented (Arif et al., 2024). Islamic education teaches values of *ahlaq al-karima* (noble character), creating an inclusive and supportive environment that prevents bullying (Muzayaroh, 2021). Islamic Religious Education also teaches values related to anti-corruption, supporting the formation of students' ethical behavior (Busiri, 2020).

### **Parenting Anti-Bullying Program at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi**

The Parenting Program at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi is a collaborative effort between the school and families to prevent and address bullying behavior among students. The school regularly involves parents through parenting meetings, which are held online via Zoom, enabling all guardians to participate regardless of time and distance. The aim of these meetings is to build synergy between the school and families in shaping children's character to be respectful, empathetic, and able to value others. In each session, parents are provided with insights on how to recognize signs of bullying, the proper ways to support their children, and strategies for positive communication with their children. Additionally, the school conducts the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with parents as a form of joint commitment in preventing and handling bullying cases. Through this program, the school hopes to establish strong cooperation between teachers and parents to create a safe, comfortable, and harmonious learning environment.

Several parenting programs have been shown to be effective in preventing bullying, particularly by involving parents in their children's education. One example is the Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), which focuses on child development, positive parenting, and discipline strategies. This program has proven effective in reducing physical bullying among adolescents, especially boys, although it does not have a significant impact on verbal bullying or victimization (Kim, 2023). A meta-analysis shows that parenting programs, both school-based and home visitation, significantly reduce bullying and victimization by improving parenting styles, children's empathy, and parent-child communication about bullying (Chen et al., 2021). Authoritarian parenting, which relies on strict control, has been found to directly correlate with higher levels of physical bullying, with aggressive behavior and low self-control in children serving as intermediary factors (Zhou et al., 2023). Additionally, high levels of family dysfunction and parental stress can negatively impact children's mental health and

increase the likelihood of involvement in bullying, although support from the surrounding environment can help reduce these negative impacts. Therefore, interventions that involve parents and focus on enhancing children's self-control and family support are highly recommended to reduce both bullying and cyberbullying (Xue et al., 2022).

### **Formulation of Anti-Bullying Rules at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi**

SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi implements clear rules and sanctions as part of its bullying prevention efforts. The school has written rules that specifically define what constitutes bullying, the forms of behavior categorized as bullying, and the consequences or sanctions that will be applied to perpetrators. These rules are outlined in the student handbook, which is provided at the beginning of the school year during the School Environmental Introduction Program (MPLS), so that each student understands the norms, moral values, and rules that apply at school. The rules are detailed in the *Buku Panduan Santri Al Wafa Setu-Bekasi*, where violations related to fighting, ethics, and decency are explained in detail.

In terms of fighting, violations include disruptive behavior in the mosque or failure to perform the sunnah prayers (qabliyah and ba'diyah). Additionally, students who cause fights, whether with peers from the same school or with outsiders, are also categorized as violators, especially if the fight is premeditated. Encouraging others to hit or harm a friend or other people is considered a serious violation. As for ethics and decency, violations include speaking or acting rudely and disrespectfully, either to fellow students or to teachers and staff. Habitual lying or giving false testimony and making false oaths also fall under violations of decency. Threatening teachers, staff, or fellow students in any form is considered a serious violation and requires special handling according to the institution's rules.

### **Creative Approach to Anti-Bullying at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi**

The creative approach and use of educational media are essential strategies for SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi in raising student awareness about the dangers of bullying. The school actively produces educational short videos and anti-bullying drama plays, performed by students themselves, so that the moral messages are conveyed in an engaging and easily understood way. Through these activities, students not only learn about the negative impact of bullying but are also trained to develop empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect. Furthermore, the school conducts an anti-bullying commitment declaration, displaying educational posters in school areas and sharing the outcomes of meetings regarding bullying prevention with the entire school community. The educational videos are regularly screened as reminders for students to avoid harmful behaviors toward others. These activities are complemented by the writing of personal reflections, where students express their

understanding of bullying, its impact, and ways to prevent it in everyday life. This creative approach has shown to be effective in reinforcing anti-bullying messages, making the learning process more dynamic and memorable for students. By using a variety of media and interactive activities, the school helps ensure that anti-bullying values are deeply ingrained in students' attitudes and behaviors, creating a more empathetic and respectful school culture.

The Al Wafa Junior High School in Setu, Bekasi, has adopted an educational and collaborative-based bullying prevention strategy with the consideration that this approach can provide comprehensive understanding to all school members, strengthen the social data regarding student interactions and the potential occurrence of bullying incidents, and align with the values of Islam and nationalism that emphasize respect for others. This strategy is also viewed as effective in mitigating the risk of legal consequences arising from acts of violence within the school environment. The approach emphasizes that bullying is not only a violation of social norms but also a violation of moral and religious values, which requires prevention from an early stage. As a result, its implementation is preventative by fostering collective awareness and moral responsibility among students.

The implementation of the bullying prevention strategy at Al Wafa Junior High School in Setu, Bekasi, emphasizes synergy among the school elements, including the principal, the student affairs department, subject teachers, class advisors, guidance and counseling (BK) teachers, and parents, all of whom work integratively. The BK teachers act as the main technical implementers, while subject teachers and class advisors provide support through modeling positive behaviors, involving students in educational drama activities, and class discussions on empathy values, as well as providing individual approaches to students requiring special attention. This educational and experiential-based strategy was initiated as a response to bullying incidents involving students from different grade levels, which led to the strengthening and expansion of the prevention program across all grade levels. Thus, the school not only enforces internal regulations but also builds open communication, increases student trust in teachers and the school, and strengthens the moral, Islamic religious, and Pancasila values as guidelines for daily behavior.

### **Control of the Bullying Prevention Program at Al Wafa Junior High School, Setu, Bekasi**

The control of the bullying prevention strategy is carried out comprehensively and continuously by involving all school members, from the principal, teachers, educational staff, to the students themselves. Each teacher is provided with an understanding of the anti-bullying strategy and is expected to actively monitor and apply anti-violence values in the classroom and school environment. The principal gives authority to the guidance and counseling (BK) teachers

to oversee and provide counseling services to students who are suspected of being involved in bullying, either as perpetrators or victims. Additionally, advice and character building are incorporated into the learning activities to instill moral awareness and empathy towards others. Control efforts are carried out through regular reminders about the prohibition of bullying, continuous education during lessons, and coordination with the student organization (OSIS) in monitoring the anti-bullying program. Supervision is carried out in various areas of the school, from classrooms and dormitories to the school surroundings, to ensure that all students feel safe and protected.

Strategic steps implemented include the creation of a clear and firm anti-bullying policy, routine training for teachers and staff to enhance early detection skills, and student involvement in educational programs and positive campaigns. The school also builds an anti-bullying culture through social, religious, and behavior-conditioning activities. Monitoring and evaluation are carried out routinely every month, at the end of each semester, and at the end of the academic year through meetings involving teachers, BK, and the student affairs department. Supervision is strengthened through intensive socialization, routine patrols, individual and group counseling services, and quick responses to case reports. Furthermore, parents and the surrounding community are involved in supporting supervision. Evaluations of the program's outcomes are used to improve the system and prevention strategies in the following period, with comprehensive monitoring in classrooms, common areas, counseling rooms, and even on social media to prevent cyberbullying.

### **Impact of the Bullying Prevention Program at Al Wafa Junior High School, Setu, Bekasi**

The strategy employed by the principal of Al Wafa Junior High School in Setu, Bekasi, to prevent bullying has shown significant results in terms of behavioral changes and the school climate. Students are now more open in their interactions, communicate politely, and show a reduction in bullying behavior, both verbally and physically. Their enthusiasm for the anti-bullying program has increased through their involvement in creative activities such as creating posters and participating in positive campaigns. Additionally, student discipline and participation in religious and extracurricular activities have also improved. The school environment is perceived as increasingly safe, comfortable, and conducive to the emotional and social development of students, although it is still influenced by peer dynamics. Teachers and educational staff also play an active role in supporting the program, integrating bullying issues into lessons, strengthening communication with students, and providing humane and continuous case resolution.

The bullying prevention program at Al Wafa Junior High School in Setu, Bekasi, has also had a positive impact on increasing empathy and reducing aggressive behaviors among students. They are more open with the BK teacher and class advisors when facing social issues, and they have a deeper understanding of the negative consequences of bullying. Social relationships among students have become more harmonious, with a habit of resolving conflicts through open communication and mutual respect. The personal approach of the BK teachers encourages students to report issues, so potential problems can be identified and addressed early. The school environment now feels more conducive, safe, and supportive of the teaching and learning process. Routine evaluations carried out by the principal along with the deputy principal for student affairs show a decrease in bullying cases, especially physical bullying, and an increase in social awareness and concern among students.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The strategy implemented at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi has proven effective in reducing bullying cases, improving student interactions, enhancing school safety, and involving teachers, students, and parents in creating a conducive and positive environment. The success of this program is supported by the active participation of all school stakeholders, from leadership, teachers, and staff to students and parents, with a well-organized and sustainable approach. Religious, moral values, as well as educational and collaborative approaches, are integrated into every activity, allowing students not only to understand the negative consequences of bullying but also to develop empathy, respect their peers, and have the courage to report bullying incidents. Regular evaluations are conducted every month through meetings, questionnaires, and direct observations to assess the program's effectiveness and identify emerging challenges. Success indicators are seen in the reduction of bullying cases, the positive change in students' social behavior, and the creation of a safe and harmonious school climate.

From these findings, it can be concluded that the bullying prevention strategy at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi is implemented systematically, participatively, and sustainably. The principal plays a central role, but all school members and the community are involved in supervision, while the involvement of guidance counselors, class teachers, and the student council (OSIS) strengthens the on-the-ground implementation. The monitoring covers all areas of the school, including classrooms, public spaces, and cyberspace, to ensure comprehensive student safety. The strategy's effectiveness is measured by the decrease in bullying cases, increased student awareness, and the development of a positive and harmonious school culture. With strong synergy among the leadership, teachers, students, and parents, as well as consistent evaluation

and follow-up, this strategy has proven effective and serves as a comprehensive model for bullying prevention at SMP Al Wafa Setu Bekasi.

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