

FOSTERING A CULTURE OF FRIENDSHIP WITHOUT BULLYING THROUGH A LEGAL EDUCATION APPROACH IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

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Article history:

Received: June 2026

Revised: June 2026

Accepted: June 2026

ABSTRACT Bullying remains a significant social and legal issue in educational settings, as it adversely affects students' psychological well-being and social development. This community service activity aimed to strengthen students' understanding of healthy social interaction and to prevent bullying through a legal education approach. The activity was conducted through online legal counseling involving junior high school and senior high school students. The methods employed included the delivery of educational materials through instructional videos, interactive discussion, and scientific publication as an output of the activity. The findings indicate that bullying, particularly verbal bullying, remains the most prevalent form and is influenced by individual, family, school, peer, and media-related factors. The study also shows that bullying continues to occur across different levels of education, indicating that it must be addressed as a serious issue within educational settings. Normatively, bullying prevention is reinforced by religious values as reflected in Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 11, constitutional guarantees under Article 28G of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, and regulatory protection under the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Regulation Number 6 of 2026 concerning Safe and Comfortable School Culture. At the international level, the principal legal foundation is the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. Article 19 of the Convention requires States to undertake legislative, administrative, social, and educational measures to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment, or exploitation. Accordingly, bullying prevention in educational settings should not be understood solely as a moral or disciplinary concern, but also as a matter of legal protection and human rights.

KEYWORDS: *Legal Awareness; Legal Education; Students; Educational Settings.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The national education system, as mandated by Law Number 20 of 2003, stipulates that higher education institutions are obliged to carry out education, research, and community service as part of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education (Sihite, 2025; Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, 2025). Furthermore, Law Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education affirms that lecturers are professional educators and scholars whose primary duties are to transform, develop, and disseminate knowledge and technology through education, research, and community service (Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012 Tentang Pendidikan Tinggi, 2012). One of the forms of dharma that lecturers may undertake in fulfilling their primary duties to transform, develop, and disseminate knowledge and technology is community service. Accordingly, a community service program focusing on bullying was conducted. This program was based on the understanding that human beings, as social beings, cannot be separated from social interaction in their daily lives. This raises the question of what is meant by social interaction. According to Soerjono Soekanto, social interaction is a social process related to the way individuals and groups relate to one another in order to build a system within social relations.

Building a system of social relations requires rules or norms to preserve the integrity of those relations. The existence of norms in social life creates comfort and security for each individual in social interaction. In this regard, the Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat verse 11, provides guidance regarding norms that should govern social relationships. Allah SWT states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

Meaning:

“O you who believe, let not one people ridicule another people; perhaps they may be better than them. Nor let women ridicule other women; perhaps they may be better than them. Do not insult one another and do not call one another by offensive nicknames. Evil is the name of wickedness after faith. And whoever does not repent, then they are the wrongdoers.”

From this verse, it is understood that there are several prohibitions in social interaction, namely:

- a. One group is prohibited from ridiculing another group, because those who are ridiculed may be better than those who ridicule them.

- b. Women are prohibited from ridiculing other women, because those who are ridiculed may be better than those who ridicule them.
- c. Individuals are prohibited from insulting one another and from calling one another by offensive nicknames, because the worst name is wickedness after faith.

These prohibitions contain commands that must be obeyed and must not be violated, so that individuals in social interaction may feel safe and protected from acts of violence. These religious teachings are in harmony with constitutional provisions concerning human rights. Such provisions are contained in Articles 28A to 28J of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, as amended (Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945 [The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia], 1945). For example, Article 28G paragraphs (1) and (2) guarantees constitutional rights in the form of:

- a. the right to personal protection;
- b. the right to family protection;
- c. the right to protection of honor;
- d. the right to protection of dignity;
- e. the right to protection of property under one's control;
- f. the right to a sense of security;
- g. the right to protection from threats of fear to do or not to do something that constitutes a human right;
- h. the right to be free from torture;
- i. the right to be free from treatment degrading human dignity; and
- j. the right to obtain political asylum from another country.

In addition to constitutional provisions, there is also the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 46 of 2023 concerning the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Educational Units, which provides legal protection to students, educators, educational staff, and other members of educational units from acts of violence occurring in educational institutions. One form of violence addressed by this regulation is bullying.

Bullying remains a serious threat to children in school environments. Data collected by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and the Indonesian Teachers Union Federation (FSGI) reveal that the forms of bullying most frequently experienced by victims are as follows (Sekolah Relawan, 2023):

Table 1. Percentage of bullying

No.	Type of Bullying	Percentage
1	Verbal bullying	29.3%
2	Psychological bullying	15.2%

The data show that verbal bullying accounts for 29.3%. Verbal bullying occurs when a person uses spoken language to gain power over the victim. Forms of verbal bullying include teasing, giving offensive nicknames, making inappropriate sexual comments, mocking, and threatening (Kurnia et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, based on educational level, the data on victims in elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school are as follows:

Table 2. Bullying Victims by Educational Level

No.	Educational Level	Percentage
1	Elementary School (SD)	26%
2	Junior High School (SMP)	25%
3	Senior High School (SMA)	18.75%

The table shows that the tendency of victimization decreases as the level of education increases. Nevertheless, bullying victims are still found at all levels, from elementary school to senior high school. Throughout 2024, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) received 2,057 complaints. Of these, 954 cases were followed up to the termination stage. The remaining cases were provided with psychoeducational services and referrals to local service providers. Case monitoring was conducted in 78 regions, covering the Child Rights Fulfillment (PHA) cluster and the Special Protection for Children (PKA) cluster (Ahzar et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of bullying, as reflected in the data above, indicates that bullying behavior is a form of juvenile delinquency that frequently occurs during adolescence. This is because adolescence is characterized by a high level of egocentrism. Adolescence is a developmental phase between childhood and adulthood, generally referring to students or adolescents aged 12 to 18 years (Budiman & Asriyadi, 2021).

2. METHOD

This International Community Service VIII (Thailand) activity was carried out both offline and online. The service location was Kampung Indonesia Nonthaburi, Praset Islam Mosque, Thailand, on April 19, 2026.

The materials presented in this International Community Service VIII activity were derived from secondary data, namely data obtained from official documents, books related to bullying, research findings, and statutory regulations. The secondary data consisted of primary legal materials and secondary legal materials.

Primary legal materials are legal materials possessing authoritative force, consisting of legislation and judicial decisions. The primary legal materials used in this study included statutory regulations such as the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Regulation Number 6 of 2026 concerning Safe and Comfortable School Culture. The principal international legal basis referred to in this study was the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, particularly Article 19 of the Convention. (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

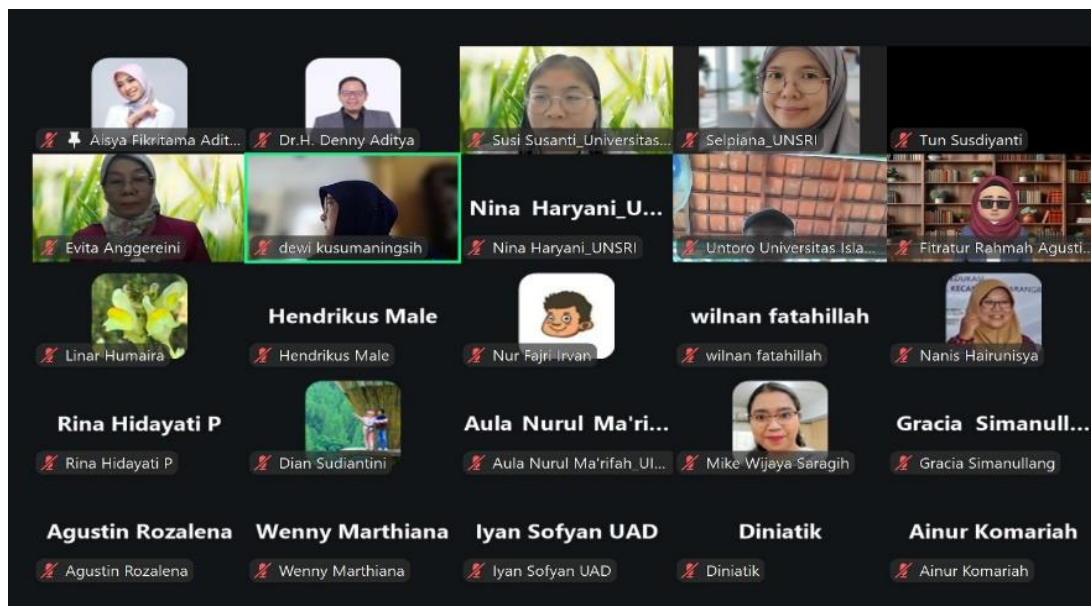


Figure 1. International Community Service by zoom meeting

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Elements and Factors Contributing to Bullying

Bullying is an act of intimidating or harming another person, either physically or psychologically, in the form of repeated verbal, social, or physical violence over time, such as calling someone by an unwanted nickname, hitting, pushing, spreading rumors, threatening, or

intimidating (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016). Based on this definition, bullying consists of several elements, namely:

- 1) Harming others;
- 2) Involving both physical and psychological dimensions;
- 3) Taking the form of verbal, social, or physical violence;
- 4) Occurring repeatedly and over time;
- 5) Calling someone by an unwanted nickname; and
- 6) Hitting, pushing, spreading rumors, threatening, or intimidating.

These elements show that bullying is not merely harmless joking. In everyday life, particularly in school environments, students sometimes perceive mockery, insults, offensive nicknames, or acts that humiliate their peers as mere jokes. However, if such actions cause pain, degrade dignity, are repeated, create fear, or make the victim feel unsafe, they may be categorized as bullying.

Bullying may have serious effects on victims. Victims may experience shame, fear, anxiety, loss of self-confidence, decreased motivation to learn, reluctance to attend school, and even psychological distress. Therefore, bullying must be understood as a form of violence that damages the educational climate and contradicts the values of friendship.

In educational environments, bullying may take several forms. First, **verbal bullying**, namely hurting others through words, such as mocking, insulting, cursing, threatening, humiliating, or calling friends by offensive nicknames. Second, **physical bullying**, namely violence directly affecting the victim's body, such as hitting, kicking, pushing, pulling hair, or damaging the victim's belongings. Third, **social bullying**, namely excluding, isolating, spreading slander, or influencing others not to associate with the victim. Fourth, **cyberbullying**, namely bullying carried out through digital media, such as posting harmful comments on social media, insulting others in chat groups, sharing photos or videos without consent, or issuing threats through electronic messages.

Based on the data described in the introduction, verbal bullying remains the most prominent form of bullying. The data presented in this paper indicate that verbal bullying reaches 29.3%, while psychological bullying reaches 15.2%. Likewise, bullying victims are still found at the elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school levels. Therefore, bullying must be understood as a serious issue across various levels of education.

At the same time, five factors influence the occurrence of bullying, namely: (Andriyani et al., 2024)

- 1) Individual factors;
- 2) Family factors;

- 3) School factors;
- 4) Peer factors; and
- 5) Mass media factors.

First, **individual factors**. Bullying may occur due to certain personal characteristics of the perpetrator, such as a lack of empathy, a desire for dominance, a habit of belittling others, or an inability to control emotions. Some perpetrators engage in bullying because they want to be seen as strong, popular, or feared by their peers. Meanwhile, victims are often targeted because they are perceived as different, quiet, weak, or as having few friends. In fact, every student has the same right to be respected, protected, and treated humanely.

Second, **family factors**. The family is the first environment that shapes a child's personality. Children who grow up in families that provide little attention, are accustomed to witnessing violence, or frequently hear harsh communication may imitate such patterns in their relationships at school. Conversely, families that cultivate affection, polite communication, respect for others, and emotional self-control will help children develop empathy and an attitude of respect toward others. Therefore, effective and proper communication must be built between parents and children so that parents are more likely to know and become aware of bullying experienced by their children. Effective communication within the family affects child development from an early age, for example by strengthening emotional bonds between parents and children, ensuring proper delivery of messages, developing children's thinking abilities, changing children's behavior, creating a safe, comfortable, and child-friendly environment, and fostering a calmer and warmer atmosphere (Hamidah et al., 2024). However, when family harmony is disrupted or when a family experiences problems, some family members may seek an outlet for their emotions, which may be expressed through bullying (Haslan et al., 2022).

Third, **school factors**. School is a place where students learn, socialize, and form their character. If a school does not have a safe and comfortable culture, lacks proper supervision, or allows mockery and humiliation to occur, bullying may develop into a habit. Therefore, schools need to build an environment that protects the physical dimension, maintains psychological well-being, respects diversity, and fosters relationships among members of the school community that are equal, respectful, and dignified. This is in line with the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Regulation Number 6 of 2026 concerning Safe and Comfortable School Culture, which places physical protection, psychological well-being, sociocultural security, as well as digital civility and digital safety as integral parts of a safe and comfortable school culture (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah Nomor 6 Tahun 2026 Tentang Budaya Sekolah Aman Dan Nyaman, 2026).

Fourth, **peer factors**. During adolescence, peer influence is very strong. A student may participate in bullying because they want to be accepted within a group, fear being excluded, or simply join in laughing at the victim. In this regard, moral courage is very important. Students need to be educated to have the courage to say that bullying is wrong, not to participate in spreading ridicule, and to help friends who become victims. Juvenile delinquency is also influenced by peer behavior. Peer groups play a substantial role in shaping behaviors that deviate from prevailing social norms and established rules. Bullying is one form of adolescent behavior that violates social norms and reflects maladaptive patterns of social interaction (Yusraa et al., 2025).

Fifth, **mass media and digital media factors**. Technological development has caused social interaction to occur not only directly but also in digital spaces. Social media can serve as a positive medium for learning and communication. However, if not used wisely, social media may also become a medium for cyberbullying. The Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Regulation Number 6 of 2026 explicitly includes digital civility and digital safety, including ethics of interaction in digital spaces, digital literacy, prevention of negative content, and protection of the personal data of school members (Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah Nomor 6 Tahun 2026 Tentang Budaya Sekolah Aman Dan Nyaman, 2026).

B. Legal Education to Foster Friendship Without Bullying in Educational Settings and Its Implications

Legal education is necessary so that students understand that every individual has rights and obligations. Students need to know that mocking, insulting, threatening, spreading rumors, humiliating peers, or committing physical violence are not merely impolite acts, but may also constitute violations of legal norms. Legal education is not intended to frighten students, but rather to foster awareness that building friendships must be accompanied by a responsibility to respect the rights of others. This means that legal education serves as a preventive effort to prevent bullying. In the school context, legal education also equips students with knowledge about students' rights, legal protection, and their social responsibilities as members of the school community.

Several relevant regulations serve as the legal basis for preventing bullying, as follows:

No.	Laws and Regulations	Description
1	Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning the Amendment to Law Number 23 of 2002 on Child Protection	Article 76C of Law Number 35 of 2014 prohibits physical and verbal violence, with a maximum penalty of 3 years and 6 months of imprisonment and/or a fine of up to IDR 72,000,000. (Undang-Undang Nomor 35 Tahun 2014

No.	Laws and Regulations	Description
		Tentang Perubahan Atas Undang-Undang Nomor 23 Tahun 2002 Tentang Perlindungan Anak, 2014)
2	Regulation of the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Number 6 of 2026 concerning Safe and Comfortable School Culture	This regulation governs the objectives and scope of a Safe and Comfortable School Culture, which include: a. fulfillment of spiritual needs; b. physical protection; c. psychological well-being and sociocultural security; and d. digital civility and safety. It also regulates the implementation of a safe and comfortable school culture, supervision, monitoring and evaluation, as well as funding.
3	Law Number 1 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions	Any person who intentionally and without authorization directly sends Electronic Information and/or Electronic Documents to a victim containing threats of violence and/or intimidation, as referred to in Article 29, shall be subject to imprisonment for a maximum of 4 years and/or a maximum fine of IDR 750,000,000.
4	Convention on the Rights of the Child	Article 19 states that every child has the right to proper care and to be protected from violence, abuse, and neglect.

Source: *Processed by the author*

The mentioned regulations can serve as a foundation for schools to formulate policies prohibiting bullying. Thus, schools also play a role in shaping students’ character and creating a culture of discipline and accountability. Students will also understand the legal consequences of bullying. Legal consequences refer to the outcomes or effects arising under the law as a result of a legal act or legal event. Such consequences may take the form of responsibility, obligations, or sanctions (Wilandari et al., 2025). This means that it has implications for several aspects of efforts to prevent bullying in schools.

The implications for preventing bullying in educational settings can be implemented through several measures. First, promoting polite and respectful communication, both directly and through social media. Second, instilling empathy in students so that they are able to understand the feelings of others. Third, strengthening the role of teachers, parents, and members of the school community in supervising and guiding students’ behavior. Fourth, creating a healthy and mutually supportive friendship environment. Fifth, providing a safe reporting mechanism for victims or witnesses of bullying. Sixth, conducting early detection and providing a rapid response when signs of bullying

are identified. Seventh, providing recovery support for victims so that they can return to learning in a safe and confident manner.

In the context of the Community Service activity conducted online on April 19, 2026, this discussion becomes particularly important because the participants were junior high school students. This age group is in a period of intense social development and therefore requires an understanding of the boundary between joking and bullying, between freedom of expression and the obligation to respect others, and between positive use of digital media and harmful cyberbullying.

The results of the discussion show that bullying is a serious problem that must be prevented collectively. Bullying not only harms victims, but also damages the educational atmosphere, disrupts the learning process, weakens the sense of solidarity, and undermines the value of friendship. Therefore, building a culture of friendship without bullying must be pursued through a combination of legal education and other values, such as religious values, social values, child protection, and the commitment of schools to create a safe and dignified learning environment.

Ultimately, an educational environment free from bullying will create a learning atmosphere that is safe, comfortable, and enjoyable. Schools must become places where every student can grow, learn, achieve, and build friendships without fear. A culture of friendship without bullying must be cultivated continuously so that students may become a generation that is civilized, caring, responsible, and respectful of the dignity of fellow human beings. Therefore, preventive efforts to avert bullying in schools require comprehensive measures involving the government, schools, parents, and students (Qomariah, 2025).

4. CONCLUSION

Bullying is a social phenomenon with legal implications because it has the potential to violate human rights, particularly the rights to personal protection, dignity, and security. Based on the results of this community service activity, bullying is still found at various levels of education, with verbal bullying remaining the dominant form. A legal education approach constitutes one strategy for increasing students' awareness in building healthy social interaction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who provided support, assistance, and contributions to the implementation of International Community Service VIII in Thailand. In particular, appreciation is extended to the Rector of Universitas Islam Jakarta, Prof. Dr. Ir. Raihan, M.Si.; the Dean of the Faculty of Law, Universitas Islam Jakarta, Prof. Dr. Farhana, S.H., M.H., M.PdI.; the Head of the Institute for Research and Community Service, Universitas

Islam Jakarta, Mimin Mintarsih, S.H., M.H.; the Committee of International Community Service VIII Kampung Indonesia Nonthaburi Thailand; colleagues; and all parties who devoted their time to discussion during the writing of this article for the International Community Service VIII activity, thereby enabling this work to be completed successfully.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declares that the International Community Service VIII activity was conducted independently, objectively, and in accordance with the principles of good governance, namely transparency, accountability, and professionalism.

In its implementation, the author upheld academic integrity and complied with the applicable principles of legal research ethics. Accordingly, the author states that there are no conflicts of interest, whether financial, institutional, or personal, that could influence the planning, implementation, or reporting of this activity. All activities were carried out solely for the purposes of scientific development and community empowerment, without any intervention from any party that could reduce the independence and objectivity of the activity's outcomes. Thus, the results of this activity may be accounted for academically as well as ethically in accordance with applicable legal principles.

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