

THE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE POLICE – “INCUBATOR” OF BEST PRACTICE

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Motto: “A warned child is a saved child”.

Education represents the fundamental social phenomenon emerged once with the human society, specific to each social organization, fulfilling functions of informing and training the individual from an intellectual, moral, artistic and physical point of view.

In the contemporary society, the education topic has developed new connotations caused by changes which occur in all fields of the social life. Education overcomes the limits of exigencies and national values and tends to universality, towards the common value heritage of humanity. Due to this reason a unitary curriculum cannot answer alone to human diversity, while the permanent education desideratum tends to become an undoubted reality.

The educational projects, generally speaking, have the largest interdisciplinary character, and offer the most efficient modalities of forming the children’s character ever since primary school-years, because the educational factors are those most appreciated and accessible to their hearts.

It is known that ever since the most young age children accumulate an array of knowledge if they are brought into contact with objects and natural phenomena.

Children need to come into contact with actions meant to enlarge their spiritual world, to quench their cognitive thirst, to create for them opportunities in order to be able to feel strong emotions, to be able to nose around so that they would form durable convictions. These premises have been the foundation of this partnership with the police which I have set into motion throughout the 2014–2015 school year.

Through this setting in motion of the educational project in partnership “The Street – a friend or a foe” I have intended to teach the pupils how to avoid, or at least to reduce to a minimum, accidents in which the “little pedestrians” might get involved.

The project is a proof of the stimulating wish, development and perfection of those habits of the pupils needed to self-protection and increasing of care towards their own self and of those surrounding them.

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The activities proposed to be set in motion throughout the project have had as a specific form of development the direct meetings between children and the police officers, activities meant to impulse pupils to learn, to learn and to always respect the traffic rules on the public way, in their role of direct traffic participants, as well as the behaviour rules in the public transportation. The meetings with these specialized professionals have taken place both at school, where different traffic situations have been exemplified to the pupils, spoken as well as by images, (both at school and away right on the traffic ways), where pupils had to face specific situations and apply the newly formed habits as to the following of the traffic rules.

A. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

To know and follow the traffic rules and the guidelines of social conduct.

To increase the adaptation skill of the pupils to the traffic factors and conditions.

To develop those necessary attitudes regarding the correct decision making, in order to achieve the self-protection.

B. BENEFICIARIES: PUPILS

C. EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

❖ To form real and correct traffic participants;

❖ To realize own portfolios, posters and expositions that include individual products of pupils regarding traffic on the public ways, with the corresponding characteristics.

D. DURATION: JANUARY – APRIL 2015

E. PROJECT ORGANIZATION

1. The Project Team.

2. The Activity Programme:

❖ Preparation of the Activity.

❖ Setting Responsibilities: method and theme.

❖ Development of the Activity.

❖ Evaluating the Activity: monitoring, centralizing, appreciation, measurement.

3. Identifying the Resources: human, material, financial.

F. THE PROJECT DISTRIBUTION: LOCAL COMMUNITY

The activity preparation consists of disseminating the project and its importance by launching the offer to the pupils and parents followed by the project promotion to the local community and the project participating institutions.

The development itself has been structured around four main themes:

1. “**Do you know traffic?**” – the initial pupil testing through a questionnaire by choosing the correct answer.

Example of questionnaire:

Choose the correct answer:

a) A pedestrian is:

someone who is walking.

someone who is driving.

someone who is riding a bike.

b) I always walk on the sidewalk or side of the road facing traffic.

Yes

No

c) I follow traffic signs and signals while walking.

Yes

No

d) I cross the street only at corners or crosswalks.

Yes

No

e) I do not use electronics such as games and cell phones while walking.

Yes

No

f) I wear clothing that allow me to be seen by others. I wear bright colors during the day and reflective materials at night.

Yes

No

Short evaluation:

– 47 pupils (from 100) did not know traffic signs.

– just 32 pupils (from 100) did not use electronics while walking.

– 63 pupils (from 100) did not cross the street properly.

2. “**The black street chronicle**” – a meeting with traffic police officers in order to present some materials about accidents in which little pedestrians were involved due to their lack of attention:

– Around 300 children under the age of 14 die or are seriously injured on Prahova’s roads each year;

– nearly two in three road accident happen when children are walking or playing;

– almost two-thirds of child accident victims are boys;

– as a child gets older the risk of a road accident increases;

- the risk of being involved in a road accident when walking or playing is more than 10 times greater for a child with hearing difficulties;
- in the village area pupils walk or cycle to school with friends rather than with parents, the school journey is longer and they have greater freedom to be outside and to visit friend on their own.

3. “**The little pedestrian**” – simulating the traffic participation by knowing and following the traffic rules during a gathering of pupils from the other grades.

- **Step 1:** Use sidewalks and crosswalks, pedestrian bridges or tunnels whenever possible.
- **Step 2:** The old rules apply: Stop, look and listen. Do not enter a crosswalk while looking down at your phone or listening to loud music with headphones.
- **Step 3:** Obey official traffic control devices such as road signs, traffic lights and street markings. Wait for the right of way, and even then, proceed cautiously.
- **Step 4:** If you exercise outside, wear lightcolored clothing and invest in workout gear with reflective strips. Be extra cautious when exercising with headphones.
- **Step 5:** Walk on the right-hand side of the crosswalk whenever practical.
- **Step 6:** Walk on the left-hand side of the street facing traffic if no sidewalk is available.
- **Step 7:** Do not cross an intersection diagonally.
- **Step 8:** Make eye contact with drivers. When crossing the street, wait until you’re sure each driver sees you.

4. “**It is good to know how to react to any situation!**” – a concrete activity of going on the public ways; recognizing the traffic signs; following the traffic rules and civic manners in the public transport. The following interventions and countermeasures relating to the pedestrian environment were identified:

- Road safety education can be delivered via a variety of methods which aim to promote safe behaviour. For example pedestrians could be educated to improve awareness of other users’ needs, to develop strategies to minimize the risk of being involve in a collision or to increase general road safety knowledge. Young pedestrians are generally easier to influence than older pedestrians.
- Carriageway narrowing has also been shown to reduce average driving speeds and thus improve pedestrian safety.
- Removal of on-street parking can help to improve pedestrian safety as collisions often occur when pedestrians are crossing between parked cars (although the presence of parked cars on the street is also associated with a reduction in travelling speed).
- The use of stop lines at crossings can encourage drivers to stop further back from the crossing and therefore reduce the risk of drivers running red lights or edging onto the pedestrian crossing before the green lights. This has been shown to reduce pedestrian conflicts.

- Raised zebra or signal-controlled crossing can help to reduce vehicle speed on the approach to the crossing and encourage vehicles to give way to pedestrians.
- A central refuge can improve safety by providing pedestrians with a safe place to stop while crossing a busy road
- Improved lighting can improve pedestrian safety at night.

The last stage of the project consisted of the evaluation of the activity through organizing a round-table discussion with the participation of collaborators and beneficiaries, having the goal of appreciating and measuring the concrete educational value of all activities, which have been developing throughout this action. There have also been proposed retrievable measures in case of gaps discovery of the cognitive level and the application of the adequate manners in traffic.

HOW WE CAN KEEP CHILDREN SAFE?

As parents and teachers:

- we can set a good example and supervise them well;
- we can teach them and talk to them about roads and safety;
- we can make sure they use the right safety equipment – reins, child seats and cycle helmets.

Through the four organized meetings of this project, the pupils have discovered that the police officer is a person that watches for our safety, a friend of those who follow the rules of this game called “traffic”. The organized roll-plays have determined the pupils to discover the street from the perspective of the little police officer as part of the traffic patrol. Therefore both the adult and the young police officer shook hands with each other and worked shoulder to shoulder together to solve difficult situations emerged during the organized walks and the watched videos.

The teacher received the paper of the artful “magician” who had made possible this force deployment, closely supervised the dialogue between participants, followed the reactions of the pupils and offered them the moral support if required, created the proper conditions of an honest dialogue and intervened in the crisis situations to diminish and solve small misunderstandings occurred along the way.

In the end, we all have realized that the street becomes a friend or foe depending on our behavior, and a warned child about the hidden perils is a saved child from the traffic accidents.

By the means of the dynamic and attractive character of the project themes, as well as its educational idiosyncrasy it has permanently been ensured the pupils cultivation of moral qualities, the education of the will power, the self-control, the development of visual and acoustic acuity, of being observant.

The presented educational project was a likeable activity for the primary school pupils, through which many communication bridges have been set, preconceived ideas, previously gained in the family environment, regarding traffic police officers have also been erased and substituted with seeds of respect towards the law and order institutions in the hearts of the little traffic participants.