

Project 2022-1-BG01-KA220-SCH-000085347  
Healthy at school. Supporting the well-being and mental health of students and teachers / HAS,  
Erasmus+

**Approved by:**

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**Varna**

**Strategy for professional development of employees  
and steps to introduce ISO 45003:2021**

*“ Occupational health and safety management — Psychological health and  
safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks “*

# Healthy at school

The strategy was created under project 2022-1-BG01-KA220-SCH-000085347 "Healthy at school. Supporting the well-being and mental health of students and teachers / HAS", Erasmus+, based on the approved document "Strategy for the development of "Hristo Botev" Primary School, Varna for the period 2021 - 2025" and current individual needs of employees

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## **I. MISSION, VISION AND VALUES OF THE ORGANIZATION**

### **Mission**

"Hristo Botev" Primary School is a school that creates the best possible conditions for the personal development of each student, prepares educated, creative, active young people, brought up in the spirit of democratic universal and national values, to become responsible and full participants in public life. It provides students with intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual-moral and physical development and support according to their age, needs and interests. It develops in them competencies necessary for successful personal and professional realization and active civic life in the modern community. It prepares students for lifelong learning by providing an educational product that meets European criteria and quality requirements.

### **Vision**

"Hristo Botev" Primary School is a well-established innovative school that develops in two levels of education: elementary and lower secondary level. The school focuses on creating a positive learning environment through modern pedagogical practices to motivate and support students in the acquisition of key competencies. Achieving a quality educational process is realized with the help of highly qualified pedagogues who have modern thinking and successfully use and apply the possibilities of the normative base. The development of curricula for facultative and elective forms, tailored to the needs and interests of students, aims to develop creative

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thinking and personal qualities. The expected result of the implementation of the strategy is:

- achieving high quality of the educational process;
- creating conditions for inclusive and supportive education;
- modernizing, enriching and expanding the school's material and technical base;
- work on national programs and European projects;
- active interaction with the parent community, community council, with the aim of strengthening positive attitudes;
- raising and strengthening the school's prestige;
- increasing the quality of teaching and educational work;
- providing good general education training, high results on the National External Assessment;
- providing conditions for physical, mental, moral and social development of adolescents;
- improving the qualifications of teachers;
- raising educated individuals with opportunities for realization;
- creating a good psychological climate among the teaching staff;
- performances in the field of music, sports and arts;
- integration of students with SEN;

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- effective, efficient and economical spending of budgetary and extra-budgetary funds.

## Values

Orientation to the individual - the school's activities are oriented to the student's interest and motivation, to the age and social changes in their life, as well as to their ability to apply the acquired competences in practice:

- Equal access – every student has the right to equal access to quality education and inclusion;
- Equality - non-discrimination during the educational process;
- Innovativeness and effectiveness - pedagogical practices and the organization of the educational process are based on scientific validity and forecasting of the results of innovations;
- Cooperation and responsibility – all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff are responsible for implementing the school's policies, which are based on broad participation and cooperation with other institutions;
- Transparency and popularization of measures and results;
- Legality – all objectives, priorities, measures and specific actions comply with the laws of the country and other normative acts;
- Flexibility - the educational and training activities are oriented to the diverse personal needs and provide opportunities for free choice to the students;

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- Innovation – the administrative leadership and the teaching staff demonstrate the will and ability to adopt new approaches and philosophies in order to achieve better results.

## **II. CURRENT SERVICES/PROGRAMS OF THE ORGANIZATION**

### **NP "Together Again" 2021 – a fun and emotional summer**

In the academic year 2020/2021, the school was included in the list of schools approved for funding under the NP "Together Again" under Decree No. 378/10.11.2021. In accordance with the national program, a student tourist trip to the city of Bansko was held in August 2021 with a group of 28 students from the second, fourth and sixth grades and 3 teachers.

On August 27, the six-day tourist trip of the students of "Hristo Botev" Primary School in Varna, financed under the NP "Together Again" ended.

Twenty-eight students and three teachers traveled to Bansko. In the Park Hotel "Murite", in the conditions of an extracurricular and non-family environment, activities aimed at the intellectual, emotional and physical development of the participants were realized.

The additional excursions to Velingrad, Melnik and the Rozhen Monastery helped to get to know the Bulgarian cultural values and history.

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### **NP "Innovations in Action"**

In the academic year 2022/2023, the school participated again in the national program by concluding a contract for cooperation and exchange of innovations with Tenth Primary School "Aleko Konstantinov" in Pernik - municipal innovative school and Third Primary School "Petko Rachov Slaveikov" - municipal school in Targovishte.

### **NP "Together for every child" Module 3 "Participate and change - the parent, an active partner in school life"**

In the academic year 2022/2023, the target groups in module 3 of the national program are again parents of students from II - VII grades. The meetings are held in person, and the topics covered are from the field of psychology, healthy eating, sports and others.

### **NP "Optimization of the internal staff structure"**

It aims to increase the efficiency of public spending on education by optimizing the internal staff structure.

### **NP "Information and communication technologies (ICT) in the system of preschool and school education"**

It aims to improve the quality of students' e-learning and access to modern information and communication technologies. In the academic year

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2019/2020, five computers were received within the framework of the national program.

### **NP "Qualification"**

It helps to improve the quality and effectiveness of education and training through motivation and continuing qualification of pedagogical specialists. In the academic year 2019/2020, the director, deputy director and 9 pedagogical specialists are included in the trainings under the national program. During the academic year 2020/2021, 34 pedagogical specialists participated in additional training on the topic: "Professional portfolio of the teacher in electronic form", held at the Technical University, Varna.

### **NP "No free hour" Module 1 "No free hour at school"**

In the academic year 2021/2022, 35 pedagogical specialists took part in module 1 "No free hour at school".

### **NP "Ensuring a modern, safe and accessible educational environment"**

In the academic year 2022/2023, "Hristo Botev" Primary School participated in the implementation of activity 1 "School libraries as an educational environment" and activity 2 "Public libraries as an educational environment" from module 4 "Libraries as an educational environment", wishing to enrich

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the school library fund, as well as to increase reading interest among students. Within the framework of the national program, school initiatives are held, such as: "Bukilyub" reading club, "Fairytale afternoons", "Workshop for miracles", "School for poets", "Reading with obstacles", "Children read to children", meetings with authors of children's books and others, as well as joint initiatives with public libraries: literary reading, national reading marathon, Kamishibai Theater and others.

## **NP "Together in Arts and Sports"**

In the academic year 2022/2023, "Hristo Botev" Primary School participated in the implementation of Module 1 "Arts" and Module 2 "Sports" of the national program, developed in accordance with priority area 2 "Competences and talents" of the Strategic Framework for the Development of Education, teaching and learning in the Republic of Bulgaria (2021 – 2030).

The activities that are implemented in both modules provide conditions for the personal development of students through team interaction during their participation and performance in collective sports and arts, aimed at stimulating their interests, abilities and competences. One group and two teams function in the school:

- In Module 1 "Arts" a "Musical Art" group was formed with 12 students from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade;

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- In Module 2 "Sports" two teams have been formed: team 1 "Football" with 15 students from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and team 2 "Basketball" with 15 students from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **NP "Motivated teachers and qualification"**

In accordance with the national program, in the period from November 11 to 13, training for primary teachers for PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) was held in the city of Sofia, in which one teacher from the elementary stage of primary education participated. In the same month, a training was held in the town of Bankya on the topic: "Control of occupational stress. Modern methods and approaches for the development of logical, creative and critical thinking in students", in which one teacher from the lower secondary stage of primary education participated.

### **Project BG05M2OP001-5.001-0001 "Equal access to school education in crisis conditions"**

In the academic year 2022/2023, the school participated again in activity 2 "Training of students, including from vulnerable groups, to acquire skills for distance learning in an electronic environment", and activity 4 - "Training of educational mediators and parents to acquire skills for working in an electronic environment'. 50 first-grade students - and their parents - participate in the formed groups. The training topics are "Types of e-learning

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platforms and their functionalities" and "MS Teams & Shkolo". The leaders of the groups are IT teachers.

### **Project BG05M2OP001-2.012-0001 "Education for tomorrow"**

In "Hristo Botev" Primary School, activities are implemented under project BG05M2OP001-2.012-0001 "Education for tomorrow", which aim to increase the digital competence and skills of students.

During the 2019/2020 academic year, two groups were formed in the school in the elementary and lower secondary school stages. 32 students participated, led by IT teachers. In the same academic year, within the framework of the project, an interactive display was obtained, which was installed in the assembly hall of the school.

During the 2021/2022 academic year, "Hristo Botev" Primary School participated in activity 6 "Increasing the digital competence and skills of students in the form of an extracurricular activity". One group was formed, in which 20 second-grade students participated, led by an information technology teacher.

### **Project BG05M2OP001-3.018-0001-C01 "Support for inclusive education"**

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In "Hristo Botev" Primary School, activities were carried out under project BG05M2OP001-3.018-0001 "Support for inclusive education", which is aimed at ensuring higher quality and better access to education for children and students with special educational needs, with chronic diseases, at risk and highly gifted students in the preschool and school education system by providing additional support for personal development.

The school participated in activity 4 - "Purchase of equipment for additional support for personal development, including specialized classrooms and premises". In the academic year 2021/2022, basic equipment of a specialized office was carried out, for which materials and consumables with specific configurations and characteristics, necessary for providing additional support for personal development of children/students from the following target groups, were purchased: students with special educational needs for additional support for personal development and students at risk and behavior prevention for general support for personal development.

In activity 5 "Implementation of activities for the personal development of children, students from institutions in the system of preschool and school education", 25 students from 1st to 7th grade were included, with whom a psychologist assigned to the project works.

### **Project BG05M2OP001-2.011-0001 "Support for Success"**

In "Hristo Botev" Primary School, the activities under project BG05M2OP001-2.011-0001 "Support for success" started in the academic year 2018/2019 with groups for additional training in the subjects: Bulgarian

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language and literature, mathematics and English. In Activity 3 "Implementation of general support for personal development of students in accordance with Art. 17 and Art. 27 of the Ordinance on inclusive education through additional training in subjects for the prevention of learning difficulties and/or to overcome systemic gaps in mastering the learning content", 184 students from 1st to 7th grade were covered, who received certificates for successfully completed training.

In 2019/2020, in Activity 3 of the project, additional training groups were implemented in the following subjects: Bulgarian language and literature and mathematics. 221 students from 1st to 7th grade, who successfully passed the training, participated. In the same academic year, "Hristo Botev" Primary School also participated in Activity 6 of the "Support for Success" project - "Providing general support through career guidance in order to prepare for the transition to the next degree, for motivation to continue education, to participate in the labor market, career guidance of students from the lower secondary stage of primary education, through the personal development support centers, including the STEM training system, when applicable". 152 students from 5th and 7th grade participated, who successfully passed the training and received a certificate.

In the academic year 2020/2021, the school provided again additional training in Bulgarian language and literature, mathematics and English in Activity 3 of the project, where 132 students from 2nd to 7th grade were covered, who successfully completed the training. In Activity 6 of the project, 150 certificates were issued to 5th and 7th grade students who performed successfully during classes.

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## **Activities of interest**

During the 2022/2023 academic year, 23 interest groups were formed in "Hristo Botev" Primary School in the city of Varna, which included students from the first to the seventh grade. Activities of interest were divided into the following thematic areas: digital creativity, natural sciences, mathematics, technology, arts and culture, sports.

## **ECO school**

The "Ecoschools" program is an international program that is initiated and managed by non-governmental organizations, members of the Foundation for Ecological Education.

"Hristo Botev" Primary School is the second school in north-eastern Bulgaria, which on 09.11.2001 was awarded the prestigious award of the "Ecoschools" Program - "Green Flag" for achieved high results in the field of environmental education and upbringing of students. This award was not given once. Our school has been awarded the "Green Flag" 7 times over the years.

The "Ecoschools" program encourages the participation of teachers and students in practical activities that lead to a reduction of the harmful impact on the environment and the consumption of water and energy. Priority topics that we have worked on over the years are: "Water", "Waste", "Energy", "Noise", "Nature and biodiversity" and "Healthy school life".

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## **Innovative school**

Innovative schools are a model for building a new educational paradigm through which students will improve their educational outcomes and increase critical thinking and creativity through innovative educational processes, teaching methods, school leadership and learning strategies.

To be defined as innovative, the school must prove that by introducing innovative elements, by developing in a new way the educational content, curricula and programs, it increases the quality of education, i.e. innovative schools have more freedom in applying new, modern, innovative methods of teaching the learning material.

Innovative schools are schools that achieve improvement in the quality of education through the following activities:

- Developing and introducing innovative elements regarding the organization and/or content of training;
- Organizing the management, training and educational environment in a new or improved way;
- Using new teaching methods;
- Developing educational content, curricula and study plans in a new way.

With Decision No. 601 of the Council of Ministers dated 17.08.2022 for the adoption of the List of Innovative Schools in the Republic of Bulgaria for

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the 2022/2023 academic year, "Hristo Botev" Primary School received the status of an innovative school. The innovation that the school will implement within 2 consecutive academic years (2022 – 2024) is Integrative Mathematics.

The training is centered around interdisciplinary thematic and project-based learning. Students develop mathematical, digital, social and civic competences, search and discover their application in life and nature. By combining various activities - debate, reasoning, research and preparation of various projects, third graders enrich their knowledge and experience.

### III. SWOT ANALYSIS

<b><u>Strengths</u></b>	<b><u>Weaknesses</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provision of competent and motivated teachers distinguished by initiative, innovation and creativity, with accumulated experience and a sense of responsibility;</li> <li>● 60% of teachers with a Professional qualification degree. Created personal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Insufficient number of classrooms to carry out single-shift schooling;</li> <li>● Insufficient motivation of some students to acquire lasting knowledge;</li> <li>● Lack of accessible architectural environment for equal access of students with disabilities;</li> </ul>

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<p>register for qualification of teaching staff;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School psychologist; resource teacher and social assistants; speech therapist and pedagogical advisor;</li> <li>● Teamwork in the work of management and teachers;</li> <li>● Systematic control over the quality of the educational process;</li> <li>● Three methodical associations in which good practices, ideas, intra-school committees are exchanged;</li> <li>● Conditions have been created for the improvement of the qualifications of teachers and mentoring;</li> <li>● Good coordination and exchange of information between class teachers, the pedagogical advisor and the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A large number of absences of students in primary and lower secondary school;</li> <li>● Outdated sports facility - gym;</li> <li>● Absence of the school board;</li> <li>● Lack of foreign language competence of a large part of the teachers;</li> <li>● Insufficient administrative skills of pedagogical specialists.</li> </ul>
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<p>school management when working with students with problematic behavior or at risk;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduced system for differentiated pay for teaching work;</li> <li>● Good institutional interaction;</li> <li>● Participation of teachers in forums on education issues;</li> <li>● Working and effective internal regulatory framework;</li> <li>● The maximum number of classes, in accordance with the legal regulations and the material base 2021/2022 - 18 classes, 9 groups for a full-day organization; 2022/2023 – 18 classes, 8 groups for full-day organization;</li> <li>● Attractive working environment: Toolkit with which teachers work - laptops, multimedia, reproduction</li> </ul>	
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<p>technique, display, availability of information software products;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Ritualization of school life;</li><li>● Information about the school's activities by maintaining an up-to-date website and the local print and electronic media;</li><li>● Ensured healthy and safe conditions to protect the life and health of the participants in the educational process;</li><li>● Good material base and working environment - computer rooms, renovated classrooms, gymnasium, library, assembly hall, doctor's office, training studios, room for activities of interest, sports playground, gym, Internet access, WiFi network, video surveillance, offices for individual and group</li></ul>	
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<p>work of the pedagogical advisor and the psychologist;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduced electronic diary;</li> <li>● Official website of the school;</li> <li>● Energy-saving lighting and steam heating;</li> <li>● School canteen. Provided supportive healthy nutrition for staff and teachers;</li> <li>● Provided security;</li> <li>● Video surveillance system;</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supportive national policy for the development of education;</li> <li>● Adapting the style and working methods of teachers and orienting education to the needs of society;</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Threats</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Incorrectly presented administrative information;</li> <li>● Breaking the relationship between family and school;</li> <li>● Lowering the quality of the educational process;</li> <li>● Insufficient empathy for school life and application of the</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High requirements for own scientific and pedagogical training;</li> <li>● Implementation of the "Lifelong Learning" principle;</li> <li>● Improvement of qualification and exchange of good pedagogical practices among teachers for work in physical and electronic environments;</li> <li>● Expanding opportunities for in-school and out-of-school qualification activities and opportunities for career development;</li> <li>● Optimizing teamwork in different directions;</li> <li>● Effectiveness of the Ministry of Education's work to increase teacher training and sharing of good practices;</li> <li>● Searching for new ideas, developing, winning and</li> </ul>	<p>principles of democratic governance;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Difficulties in teaching due to a decrease in students' motivation to learn;</li> <li>● Lack of adequate assessment and active partnership on the part of the family when diagnosing children with behavioral problems;</li> <li>● Worsening of teachers' health and increasing the risk of occupational diseases;</li> <li>● Insufficient knowledge of the regulatory framework on the part of the pedagogical staff.</li> </ul>
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<p>implementing projects from European and national programs to transform the school into a desired territory;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Supporting the work of pedagogical specialists and students in distance learning in an electronic environment;</li><li>● Raising the school's image and building a sense of belonging;</li><li>● Modernizing the material and technical base and supporting the implementation of ICT-based innovations;</li><li>● Creating favorable conditions for learning and development in the school education system by building a modern educational environment based on contemporary information technologies;</li><li>● Creation of favorable conditions for teaching through continuous</li></ul>	
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<p>modernization and expansion of the building stock;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Implementation of interactive training based on modern information and communication technologies;</li><li>● Maintenance and renewal of computer, copier and communication equipment;</li><li>● Renewal of the school library fund;</li><li>● Periodically updating the school's website in order to promote the successes and achievements of students, to build the authority of the institution, to provide timely information to parents;</li><li>● Filling the pedagogical staff with highly qualified teachers with digital skills and foreign language skills;</li></ul>	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advanced communication skills in an electronic environment and formation of a culture for working with digital resources;</li> <li>● Refined system for evaluation and payment of teacher's work, linked to the qualification and the results of the pedagogical activity;</li> <li>● Activities for the aestheticization of the corridors and landscaping of the adjacent school yard.</li> </ul>	
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#### IV. STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS AND OBJECTIVES (SHORT-TERM AND LONG TERM)

"Hristo Botev" Primary School, Varna, is an innovative school with a team of professionals who are highly qualified, searching and experimenting, relying on their professional experience and open to innovation.

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The management of the school is dialogic and open to innovation, experiments, projects. It competently applies the state policy in education. It creates conditions for conducting quality training by providing resources for direct activities.

The administrative staff professionally implements the school's policy of creating a safe and business-like atmosphere, provides an accessible information environment for the school community.

As part of the Strategy for Professional Development of Employees, the following strategic priority areas have been defined:

- **Strategic priority area "Development of the skills of employees to ensure effective inclusion and lasting integration in the educational process".**

It is necessary to note that the educational work is the sphere in which the significance of the interaction between the pedagogical staff, students and parents is most clearly manifested.

The following short-term and long-term objectives have been set in relation to the area:

- 1) **Long-term objective** Development of staff skills to achieve effective interaction between teaching staff and parents to create a sustainable positive attitude towards education. This interaction should develop and build both in the context of educational work and in the process of learning and socialization.

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- 2) **Long-term objective** Development of employees' competences for prevention and reduction of aggression and discrimination at school. In recent years, the school has implemented policies aimed at the prevention and intervention of violence and bullying and to create a supportive and safe educational environment.
  
- 3) **Short-term objective** Development of employees' skills to provide support for personal development and full participation in the educational process of students with special educational needs.
  
- 4) **Short-term objective** Improving the skills of employees for effective inclusion and educational integration of students from vulnerable groups or who have received international protection, and migrants. The support for these groups of students is provided by specialists appointed at "Hristo Botev" Primary School.
  
- 5) **Short-term objective** Improving the competences of teachers to help reduce the proportion of students who drop out and leave school prematurely (in accordance with the Mechanism for preventing and reducing the number of school students' absences, as well as the Policy for the prevention of early school leavers). It

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is extremely important that the employees are able to create conditions to support the individuality of each student.

The above-mentioned objectives take into account deepening social inequalities and migration processes globally, which make it difficult to include certain groups in education, as well as socio-economic, demographic and other barriers to education in Bulgaria.

- **Strategic priority area "Assessment of techniques by the pedagogical staff to increase the motivation for learning and the full participation of students".**

In accordance with it, the following objectives have been defined:

- 1) **Short-term objective** Acquisition by staff of competencies to apply an individual approach to the needs of each student.
- 2) **Long-term objective** Developing the skills of teaching staff to provide support for the full participation of students.

- **Strategic priority area "Motivation and creativity among teachers".**

In accordance with it, the following objectives have been defined:

- 1) **Long-term objective** Development of competences in accordance with the changing role of the teacher. We strive to develop the team of highly qualified teachers by using various forms of qualification, participation in scientific-practical conferences, open lessons, team building, trainings, workshops, seminars and other opportunities.

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- **Strategic priority area "Adoption and implementation of educational innovations by the pedagogical staff".**

The following short- and long-term objectives were set:

- 1) **Long-term objective** Development of the competences of the pedagogical staff for teaching in an innovative environment and for applying innovative teaching methods.
- 2) **Short-term objective** Improving the skills of employees in the field of education for sustainable development.
- 3) **Short-term objective** Development of the competences of the pedagogical staff for teaching in a digital environment and through digital resources (taking into account the growing digitalization and the introduction of new technologies).
- 4) **Long-term objective** Achieving increased employee participation in European projects (including under the Erasmus+ program). Professionalism, flexibility, adaptability, great initiative and teamwork are needed in the work of employees to use all opportunities for development and to deal with the challenges of modern times.

When implementing the objectives of the Strategy, the following principles will be observed:

- Orientation to the employees – promoting their ability to apply the acquired competences in practice;

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- Innovativeness and efficiency - pedagogical practices and the organization of the educational process by employees will be based on scientific validity and predicting the results of innovations;
- Transparency and popularization of measures and results;
- Legality - all objectives, priorities, measures and specific actions comply with the laws of the country and other normative acts;
- Innovation - employees will demonstrate the will and ability to adopt new approaches in order to achieve better results.

## V. ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES TO ACHIEVE THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To achieve the strategic priorities, short-term and long-term objectives indicated in the previous section, relevant actions and implementation initiatives were defined.

- **Strategic priority area "Development of the skills of employees to ensure effective inclusion and lasting integration in the educational process":**
  - 1) Actions to achieve long-term objective Development of staff skills to achieve effective interaction between teaching staff and parents to create a sustainable positive attitude towards education:
    - Trainings to build the skills of employees for the development of partnership relationships between the school and the parent community;

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- Joint work between teachers and parents to adapt children to the educational system and develop motivation to learn;
  - Building skills of employees through trainings on attracting parents as like-minded individuals and participants in: environmental activities; charity activities; the preparation and realization of festivities, celebrations, performances; school trips; participation in the preparation of lesson activities on projects; in activities of interest, in competitions, contests, exhibitions and others;
  - Timely information about planned school activities and achieved results;
  - Promotion of achievements and good practices through the school website;
  - Organizing Open Days.
- 2) Actions to achieve the long-term objective Development of employees' competencies for prevention and reduction of aggression and discrimination at school:
- Trainings to develop the skills of employees to form and reinforce a school-wide culture of non-violence and a positive learning environment by building values, rules and procedures that prevent violence and bullying at school (celebrating "Pink Shirt Day" against bullying at school; International Day of People with Down Syndrome; International Day of Tolerance);
  - Annual planning of preventive activities based on an assessment of the problem of bullying and violence at school (based on a special

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- questionnaire - staff training on how to apply the questionnaire to students);
- Internal school qualification for employees on the prevention of aggression;
  - Conducting consultations.
- 3) Actions to achieve the short-term objective Development of employees' skills to provide support for personal development and full participation in the educational process of students with special educational needs:
- Improving the skills of teachers to work with children and students with special educational needs (through educational seminars, courses and trainings);
  - Increasing the qualifications of specialists working with children and students with SEN to assess their educational needs (through training seminars, courses and trainings, raising the Professional qualification level);
  - Increasing the skills of employees to use adapted educational resources for children/students with special educational needs (through staff training).
- 4) Actions to achieve the short-term objective Development of staff skills for effective inclusion and educational integration of students from vulnerable groups or recipients of international protection, and migrants:
- Improving the skills of teachers for working with children and students from vulnerable groups and/or migrant origin, with the aim

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- of their integration and increased participation in the educational process (through educational seminars, courses and trainings);
- Increasing the qualifications of specialists working with children and students from vulnerable groups and/or migrant origin for assessing their needs and applying adapted resources (through training seminars, courses and trainings, increasing the Professional qualification level);
  - Improving the skills of employees to create a favorable learning environment for children from vulnerable groups and/or migrant backgrounds (through staff training).
- 5) Actions to achieve the short-term objective Increasing the competences of teachers to help reduce the proportion of students who drop out and leave school prematurely:
- Team work between teachers and other pedagogical specialists to provide general and additional support for the personal development of children and students;
  - Improving the skills of specialists for the prevention of early school leaving (ESL) through staff training;
  - Increasing the competencies of employees to promote the inclusion of risk groups in education and develop inclusive education (through trainings and seminars).
- **Strategic priority area "Assessment of techniques by the pedagogical staff to increase the motivation for learning and the full participation of students":**

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- 1) Actions to achieve the short-term objective Acquisition by staff of competencies to apply an individual approach to the needs of each student:
  - training for staff to implement student-centered learning, taking into account the individual capabilities of each student;
  - training in the use of various pedagogical approaches, focusing on the capabilities of each student and teamwork;
  - increasing the competencies of employees to create conditions for performances of students experiencing difficulties.
- 2) Actions to achieve the long-term objective Developing the skills of teaching staff to provide support for full participation of students:
  - Increasing the competencies of employees to implement a system of rewards and incentives for students, which motivates and encourages their active participation in the educational process (through staff training);
  - Improving the skills of teachers to strengthen the motivation and satisfaction of students with the quality of education in all subjects;  
Increasing the skills of employees to apply innovative forms of presenting students' achievements to parents (through teacher training).

- **Strategic priority area "Motivation and creativity among teachers".**

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- 1) Actions to achieve the long-term objective Development of competencies in accordance with the changing role of the teacher:
  - Improving the qualifications of teachers as a purposeful, consistent and continuous process;
  - Carrying out a targeted selection of newly appointed teachers, who have high qualifications and command of foreign languages, and possess experience in the implementation of projects;
  - Use of various forms of qualification, participation in scientific-practical conferences, open lessons, team building, trainings, workshops, seminars;
  - Provision of a free choice of forms for professional development - self-education, intra-school qualifications, external lecturers;
  - Provision of continuing qualification training aimed at updating and expanding key competences (foreign language, digital, innovation, entrepreneurship);
  - Linking the achieved professional qualification degree with additional financial incentives provided for in the internal salary rules;
  - Providing support for teachers working with gifted children;
  - Increasing the individual remuneration of workers within the approved means in the delegated budget.
  
- **Strategic priority area "Adoption and implementation of educational innovations by the pedagogical staff":**

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- 1) Actions to achieve the long-term objective Development of the competences of the pedagogical staff for teaching in an innovative environment and for applying innovative teaching methods:
  - Teamwork in making decisions, proposing and implementing innovations;
  - Introduction, validation and multiplication of innovative practices implemented through mobility;
  - Increased access of teachers to innovative products (publication and presentation);
  - Exchange of data and experiences between teachers related to student achievement by using open educational resources;
  - Development and implementation of supportive policies for innovation.
- 2) Actions to achieve the short-term objective Increasing the skills of employees in the field of education for sustainable development:
  - Increasing the competences of employees (through training) to implement activities to explore nature, as well as activities related to increasing physical activity and healthy eating;
  - Increasing the skills of employees to build an ecological culture in school;
  - Training aimed at promoting health education, healthy nutrition, first aid, road safety, and others.
- 3) Actions to achieve the short-term objective Development of the competences of the pedagogical staff for teaching in a digital environment and through digital resources:

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- Improving the skills of pedagogical specialists for teaching in an online environment and for the development and use of digital educational content (through Internal qualification);
- Organization of the learning process, where each teacher has their own electronic device and a personal profile connected to it;
- Formation of employees' competences for creating, editing, enriching and updating digital content;
- Formation of skills for safe use of the Internet, to recognize risks, threats, fake news (Internal qualification of teachers for safe use of the Internet);
- Creation of teaching conditions by using integrated educational platforms and cloud technologies;
- Implementation of modern interactive learning tools – projectors, cameras, multimedia boards and applications, laptops, updating the available computers.
- Actions to achieve the long-term objective of achieving increased employee participation in European projects (including under the Erasmus+ program):
- Development, winning and implementation/management of European projects (including under the Erasmus+ program);
- Promoting the Erasmus+ program among teachers and providing information about its possibilities.

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## **VI. EXPECTED RESULTS**

The main expected results of the implementation of the Strategy for the professional development of employees are:

- Achieving development of the professional skills of school employees to ensure high quality of the educational process;
- Achieving development of employees' competencies to create conditions for inclusive and supportive education and to include students with learning difficulties, with special educational needs and from other vulnerable groups (e.g. migrants);
- Enhanced participation of employees in European projects (including under the Erasmus+ program);
- Achieved active interaction of the pedagogical staff with the parent community, community council, with the aim of strengthening positive attitudes.

Expected results in strategic priority areas:

1. Strategic priority area "Development of the skills of employees to ensure effective inclusion and lasting integration in the educational process":

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- Formed competences of teachers to build a trusting relationship with parents and create positive attitudes towards the school and the educational process as a whole;
- Formed competences of employees to create a positive and calm school climate, bringing satisfaction to teachers, students and parents.

2. Strategic priority area "Assessment of techniques by the pedagogical staff to increase the motivation for learning and the full participation of students":

- Formed skills in employees for evoking lasting interest and motivation towards academic work;
- Formed skills among employees to increase students' satisfaction with the quality of their education;
- Increased competencies of employees to develop the creative potential of students in various forms of extracurricular activities and interest clubs; to stimulate participation and success of students in national and regional contests, Olympiads and competitions.

3. Strategic priority area "Motivation and creativity among teachers".

- Increased motivation for professional development among school staff;
- Created a precise system for evaluation and payment of teacher's work, linked to the qualification and the results of the pedagogical activity;
- Increased participation of employees in various forms of qualification, scientific-practical conferences, open lessons, team building, trainings, workshops, seminars; in continuing qualification training

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aimed at updating and expanding key competencies (foreign language, digital, innovation, entrepreneurship);

- Linkage of the achieved professional qualification degree with additional material stimulation provided for in the internal salary rules;
- Increasing the individual remuneration of workers within the approved funds in the delegated budget.

#### 4. Strategic priority area "Adoption and implementation of educational innovations by the pedagogical staff":

- Increased skills of teachers for implementation of integrated education;
- Modernized material and technical base;
- Provided modern and accessible technology to employees to implement interactive training;
- Increased skills of teachers for the use of integrated educational platforms and cloud technologies.

## **VII. TIMELINE AND ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

With regard to the priority areas, a timeline and an estimated budget for the implementation of the activities were created.

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1. Strategic priority area "Development of the skills of employees to ensure effective inclusion and lasting integration in the educational process":

Duration: 2023-2027

Funding: School budget, projects, earmarked funds from the Ministry of Education and Science, national programs, donations.

Estimated budget: 60 000 leva.

Responsible persons: Principal, deputy director of educational activities, psychologist, teachers, community council, head teacher, class teachers, media committee, deputy director of administrative and social activities, resource teacher, Group for all-day organization of the school day, speech therapist.

2. Strategic priority area "Assessment of techniques by the pedagogical staff to increase the motivation for learning and the full participation of students

Duration: 2023-2027

Funding: School budget, projects, earmarked funds from the Ministry of Education and Science, donations.

Estimated budget: 60 000 leva.

Responsible persons: Principal, deputy director of educational activities, teachers, psychologist, resource teacher.

3. Strategic priority area "Motivation and creativity among teachers".

Duration: 2023-2027

Funding: School budget, projects, earmarked funds from the Ministry of Education and Science, self-financing.

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Estimated budget: 30 000 leva.

Responsible persons: Principal, deputy director of educational activities, Director of the committee, teachers.

4. Strategic priority area "Adoption and implementation of educational innovations by the pedagogical staff":

Duration: 2023-2027

Funding: School budget, projects, earmarked funds from the Ministry of Education and Science, donations.

Estimated budget: 80 000 leva.

Responsible persons: Principal, teachers, head teacher, foreign language teachers, deputy director of educational activities, class teachers, IT teachers, deputy director of administrative and social activities, natural sciences teachers, class teachers, physical education and sports teachers.

"Hristo Botev" Primary School, Varna is a non-specialized school with a delegated budget from the Municipality of Varna.

The school has the following financial resources:

- Improvement of the activities of financial provision of the school for the realization of the strategic goals, by investing revenues from the municipality's budget for capital expenditures and from own funds from donations;
- Objectivity, publicity and accessibility when developing and managing the budget;

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- Flexible management solutions tailored to the cash flow;
- Additional financial revenues from participation in projects and programs;
- Correct and regular provision of funds for wages and salaries, insurance contributions, additional labor remuneration, funds for clothing, as well as all current expenses for the maintenance of the school and support of all projects, initiatives.

The activities will be financed through:

- Effective distribution of funds from the school budget, in accordance with state educational standards;
- Participation in municipal, national and international projects and programs;
- Donations.

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## **VIII. POSSIBLE RISKS AND PREVENTIVE STEPS (ACCORDING TO ISO 45003-2021)**

This Strategy is aligned with Document ISO 45003:2021 "Occupational health and safety management - Psychological health and safety at work - Guidelines for the management of psychosocial risks", which provides guidance on the management of psychosocial risk within an occupational health and safety management system based on ISO 45001.

These recommendations enable our organization to prevent work-related illnesses, protect the health (including mental health) of our employees and other stakeholders to promote well-being in the workplace. Effective management of workplace safety and health benefits our employees, the organization, and society as a whole. The current state of economic uncertainty in Bulgaria is also taken into account.

Occupational safety and health (OSH) issues are not dismissed as an 'administrative burden' and statutory workplace requirements are not the only

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ones being met, as this would be counterproductive. It is important to always be aware of workplace risks and how to manage them effectively.

Protecting our employees from workplace health and safety hazards is a key element in achieving sustainable decent working conditions for all workers. It helps reduce workplace health risks and improve occupational health and safety (OHS) standards. However, challenges remain and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the risks that need to be addressed.

It is important to bear in mind that the pandemic contributed significantly to the increase in MENTAL HEALTH problems (EU Health Bulletin - Issue 258, 2020), incl. in schools. Stress is becoming more common in the workplace, and it contributes to lost working days (Eurofound and EU-OSHA, 2014).

During the pandemic, a large number of teachers started working remotely. As a result, we have identified the following POTENTIAL RISKS: blurring the boundaries between work and personal life, lack of meaningful social contacts, increased levels of anxiety and burnout, and excessive time spent online negatively affecting physical and mental health and well-being the employees.

PREVENTION OF RISKS to the psychosocial well-being of employees requires the implementation of a multi-step process as well as changes in the work environment. The EC finances projects aimed at these challenges. They aim to develop and implement interventions to promote good mental health and prevent mental illness in the workplace (in particular the HORIZON 2020, Magnet4Europe and EMPOWER projects).

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As a possible risk we have identified for employees is **WORKPLACE STRESS**, which occurs when the demands on the employee exceed their abilities to cope with them. Stress is an important negative consequence in terms of the psychosocial work environment, due to the fact that workers exposed to prolonged stress at work can be affected by serious mental and physical health problems.

**POTENTIAL PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS** are related to negative psychological, physical and social consequences due to unfavorable organization and poor social context, and include:

- work in the presence of too many requirements and/or insufficient time to complete the tasks;
- conflicting requirements and lack of clarity about the employee's role;
- mismatches between the requirements of the job and the competence of the employee - the underutilization of workers' skills can be a source of stress just as much as their overload;
- lack of participation in decisions that affect the employee and lack of influence over the way work is done;
- lack of support from management and colleagues and poor interpersonal relationships;
- mental or sexual harassment in the workplace;
- unfair distribution of work, bonuses, promotions or career opportunities;
- ineffective communication, unsatisfactorily managed organizational change and workplace insecurity;
- difficulties in combining work and home commitments.

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Effective prevention of psychosocial risks contributes to building a healthy, challenging but supportive work environment that motivates our employees and encourages them to develop and achieve results according to their maximum abilities.

The factors contributing to the mental health and well-being of our employees are many, but the work environment is a significant contributor. In a good psychosocial environment, work is beneficial to employees' mental health by providing organization and creating a sense of community, identity and status, opportunities for development and increased confidence. Conversely, an adverse psychosocial environment can have a negative impact on employee health.

This document is aligned with various RECOMMENDATIONS/STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION AND DEALING WITH RISKS (including stress). They are divided into:

- Internal - using, changing and mobilizing one's own attitudes, resources, competences, personal characteristics that can prevent or control stress;
- External – ways of coping through the resources of the environment (leaders, organizational culture and policies, colleagues, close ones, psychologists, etc.).

At the personal level, the negative impact of poorly managed psychosocial risks include workplace stress, poor mental health, burnout, difficulty concentrating, making more mistakes, family problems, drug and alcohol use, and poor physical health, including cardiovascular disease and muscle - skeletal disorders.

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At the organizational level, negative impacts include poor performance, increased absenteeism, presenteeism (employees coming to work when they are sick and unable to perform their duties effectively), and increased accident and injury rates.

The workplace stress management strategies we will implement are aligned with Document ISO 45003:2021 " Occupational health and safety management - Psychological health and safety at work - Guidelines for the management of psychosocial risks".

Strategies are of general and repetitive application, address actual or potential problems, and will achieve optimal order in a given set of circumstances. They offer important benefits in terms of improving the organization's services, removing barriers and facilitating collaboration. This process will contribute to increasing the school's competitiveness, technological development and innovation.

Leading in this case for us is the standard ISO 45001:2018 „Occupational health and safety management systems — Requirements with guidance for use“. It sets out requirements for an occupational health and safety (OHS) management system and provides guidance on its implementation so that an organization can provide safe and healthy workplaces, prevent injury and illness and actively improve its OHS performance.

The standard is applicable to any organization that wishes to establish, implement and maintain an OHS management system to improve occupational health and safety, eliminate or minimize OHS risks, take advantage of OHS opportunities and address non-conformities of the OHS

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management system related to its activities. The document will help to achieve the intended results of the OHS management system. In accordance with the OHS policy, the expected results for our organization include:

- a) continuous improvement of the effectiveness of OHS;
- b) compliance with legal and other requirements;
- c) achieving the objectives under OHS.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF RISKS will help our organization to recognize and understand workplace and employee risks in order to assess and eliminate hazards or reduce occupational health and safety risks. Risks can be physical, chemical, biological, psychosocial, mechanical, electrical, and others.

Psychosocial hazards are identified and the risks and opportunities associated with them are assessed already in the planning process. In this process we took into account:

- a) work organization, social factors (including workload, working hours, exploitation, threats, harassment), leadership and organizational culture;
- b) routine and non-routine activities and situations, including hazards arising from:
  - equipment, materials and physical conditions at the workplace;
  - service design, research, development, testing, service delivery, support and others;
  - human factors;

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- how the work is carried out;
- c) previous incidents, internal or external to the organization, including emergencies, and their causes;
- d) potential emergency situations;
- e) people, including taking into account:
  - those who have access to the workplace and their activities, which includes employees, visitors and other persons;
  - those who are close to the workplace and who may be affected by the organization's activities;
  - employees in places that are not under the direct management of the organization.
- f) other matters including consideration of:
  - situations occurring near the workplace, caused by activities related to the management of the organization;
  - situations that are not managed by the organization and that occur in the vicinity of the workplace, which can cause injuries and illness to persons in the workplace;
- g) actual or proposed changes to the organization, operation, processes, activities and the OHS management system;
- h) changes in knowledge and awareness of hazards.

Through the implementation of ISO, we aim to cover all aspects of the work process in order to eliminate, reduce and limit occupational stress. All of the above can be seen as proactive actions of the organization's management in this direction, based on the judgment that workplace stress is an organizational and not a personal problem.

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But our actions in the field of occupational health and safety management do not end there. The situation surrounding COVID has presented our management and employees with unprecedented challenges. Ensuring health and safety in the face of a pandemic and meeting commitments seemed an overwhelming task. The measures taken mainly concerned the safety of people. RISKS AND MEASURES TO PREVENT AND LIMIT COVID-19 in the school were defined. This necessitated the need for general guidelines to protect personnel while at the same time allowing the organization to continue to function.

The strategy is also in line with the document ISO/PAS 45005:2020 Occupational health and safety management – General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic“, whose guidelines contribute to managing the risks arising from COVID-19, so as to protect health, employee safety and well-being. Practical guidelines applicable to the school are also included to protect staff and other stakeholders such as visitors, members of the public, etc. The school management is responsible for implementing the recommended procedures to maintain the safety, health and well-being of employees.

**SPECIFIC PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEIR PREVENTION (according to ISO):**

- The school should establish processes to manage the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and well-being of staff. Mental health and well-being can be affected by psychosocial hazards such as:

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- a) uncertainty (what is expected, how long the measures may last, impact on pay or working hours);
- b) workload and pace of work (too much or too little work, expectations to meet tight deadlines even if activities take longer due to changed ways of working);
- c) working hours (unscheduled working hours, reduced or extended working hours);
- d) role ambiguity (changes in what is expected of a role, new functions, lack of clarity);
- e) lack of control (rapid changes in risk levels leading to sudden imposition or relaxation of restrictions or changed ways of working);
- f) lack of social support (loneliness, physical isolation, communication problems);
- g) impact of prolonged isolation and remote work (excessive exposure to screens, fatigue, boredom, lack of concentration, insomnia);
- h) job insecurity (concern about possible job loss, domestic financial problems);
- i) difficulties balancing work and family life (caring responsibilities, family emergencies, need to work outside normal working hours);
- j) specific roles that are at higher risk due to frequent, close or prolonged interaction with other people (contact staff, general accessibility, mobile work);
- k) specific circumstances of the employee (belonging to a vulnerable group, loss of a loved one or serious illness in the family).

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- To manage the mental health and wellbeing risks associated with COVID-19, the school needs to:
- a) promote a culture of trust, care and support, recognizing that individual employees face different issues and that concerns or difficulties are valid and respected;
  - b) enable regular confidential meetings (remote or physical) to discuss issues and concerns and to agree ways to support the employee;
  - c) conduct regular remote or in-person meetings with employee teams;
  - d) allow for flexible working hours;
  - e) assist employees in establishing healthy boundaries between work and non-work time by communicating when they need to work and be available, taking into account the need for flexibility;
  - f) allow employees more control over work pace and deadlines if possible;
  - g) provide regular, clear and accurate information about the current situation and about planned changes that may affect employees;
  - h) consider providing appropriate PPE and other control measures for employees who are concerned about being in a physical workplace;
  - i) offer resources to help employees manage their mental health and well-being (online programs, websites, access to professionals offering psychological help in case of loss of loved ones, in case of trauma, as well as financial advice).

Our aspiration through the implementation of ISO is to preserve not only the physical but also the mental health of our employees. ISO 45003:2021 provides guidelines for managing the protection of employees' occupational

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health and safety in controlling the psychosocial risk accompanying the performance of activities that are dangerous or harmful to health and the psyche. It raises the care of workers to a new, higher level by setting standards for it and assigning the functions of ensuring safety for the health and safety of the worker to the management in the organization.

We also refer to other documents related to ISO 45003:2021: ISO 45001 on the responsibilities of the organization towards the physical and mental health of employees; ISO 9001 - Quality management systems - Requirements; ISO 14001 – Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use; ISO 10075-2 – Ergonomic principles related to mental workload – Part 2: Design principles; ISO 6385 – Ergonomics principles in the design of work systems.

For employees, psychosocial risk is related to occupational accidents and ill health: cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, diabetes, anxiety, depression, sleep disorders. For the organization, this would mean increased costs due to absenteeism, turnover, reduced quality of services and training, as well as damage to the organization's reputation.

This document also includes information on what is important to consider in relation to the occupational health and safety, satisfaction and well-being of our employees. Its structure follows several thematic directions:

– Organizational psychosocial risk management and health and safety management; external factors of occupational health and safety management; internal organizational factors – management and nature of the workforce.

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- Management and its commitment to the occupational health and safety system.
- Specifics of the employee health and safety policy and its relationship with other policies.
- Consultation and involvement of employees in the development of the policy for continuous improvement of health and safety working conditions and the success of the psychosocial risk management process.
- Planning – identification of hazards and options for coping.
- Operational planning and control is an important part of the task of managing risk and creating conditions for ensuring occupational health and safety in the work of employees. Three tasks are solved in this direction:
  - prevention of harmful effects;
  - increasing the resources of employees to deal with psychosocial risk;
  - reducing the harmful effects of the exposed to risky psychological influences.
- Psychosocial risk control:
  - psychosocial risk control measures related to the organization of the work;
  - psychosocial risk control measures related to social factors;
  - psychosocial risk control measures related to the environment, equipment and performance of hazardous tasks;
  - training of employees to detect psychosocial risk;

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- communication and control of changes that may affect health, safety and well-being at work.
- As part of the process is the development and implementation of programs for the rehabilitation and return to work of those affected by the negative consequences of the psychosocial risk:
- informing about rehabilitation possibilities;
  - diagnostics of the employees' condition;
  - counseling;
  - monitoring;
  - confidentiality.
- Monitoring, measurement, analysis and performance evaluation form the final part of the document. The organization should develop appropriate qualitative and quantitative measures in consultation with and involving employees:
- to conduct internal audits of the results of operational planning and the control of measures to protect the health and safety of employees;
  - to monitor management reports related to psychosocial risk and the occupational health and safety of employees;
  - to monitor the results of measures to protect the occupational health of employees;
  - to ensure continuous improvement of the system for safe and healthy work.

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In conclusion, key benefits of implementing an occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS) according to ISO 45001 regarding the management of workplace stress are:

- Compliance with the regulatory requirements - meeting the requirements of the regulatory acts on health and safety at work. The OHSMS provides a framework for determining, monitoring and enforcing the requirements of both the regulatory acts and the stakeholders. The system helps prevent employee accidents and the imposition of sanctions for non-compliance.
- Improving the credibility and image of the organization. The existence of an OHSMS indicates that the organization identifies hazards and risks to the OHS and manages processes in such a way that prevents accidents, injuries or illnesses from occurring.
- Reduce turnover – every employee wants to work for an organization that thinks and cares about their health and safety at work. If the organization has such an image, employees will not want to leave. Not only will they benefit from the conditions, but they will help improve occupational health and safety.
- Improvement of processes. Continuous improvement is at the heart of ISO 45001. It can help an organization improve its processes, not just occupational health and safety. The active participation of employees in the improvement process can save both time and resources of the organization.
- Improving employees' health and safety. The main reason for implementing OHSMS according to ISO 45001 is to improve health, safety

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and well-being at work by identifying and reducing OHS risks that can lead to accidents, including workplace stress, through planning, prevention and response in case of an incident at the workplace, and its future prevention..