

# A SPECIFICATION OF PUPILS' HEALTH SUPPORT THROUGH A CLASS TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES AT THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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**Abstract:** *A class teacher is an agent who can use a range of possibilities to support a healthy mental, physical and social development in individual pupils and a classroom as a whole. A class teacher's activities at each level of school education not only have their general reasons, but also specific features reflecting the educational and psychological characteristics of a pupil at a specific age and the level of their mental, physical and social maturity. In this sense the paper aims to define a framework of activities to support good health of elementary and secondary school pupils, it compares views of class teachers with regard to promoting their healthy development and specifies some other conditions for a class teacher's work at the aforementioned levels of school education. The study further explores the authors' earlier findings published from 2006–2010.*

**Key words:** *research findings, elementary school, secondary school, class teacher, health support, health risk, educational activities, respondents' views*

## **Basic considerations underlying the class teacher's work**

Class teachers play a pivotal role in educational processes at school. The class teacher is a coordinating and integrating agent with many important tasks in relation to pupils in their class, their pupils' parents, other teachers in school, school management and in certain circumstances also to the larger public. The class teacher is expected to have the ability to judge the pupil's general educational level with regard to his / her capabilities and to gradually form an idea of their important personality traits and the potential of their future positive development. In his interaction with pupils the class teacher considers both development of individuals and a class as a whole. A class teacher's activities at each level of school education not only have their general reasons, but also specific features reflecting the educational and psychological characteristics of a pupil at a specific age and the level of their mental, physical and social maturity. Quite unique with regard to the school education level is the role of a class teacher in primary

schools. This position naturally combines and integrates activities relating to upbringing, education and usually also to culture and socialization. In a sense, this interaction can be understood as the basic model where specific educational conditions allow the class teacher to optimally promote and support the pupil's healthy development (see Střelec; Krátká, 2006).

***How is the forming and development of pupils' health supported in documents crucial for the present development of Czech elementary and secondary schools?***

The framework education programme for elementary education (hereinafter FEP EE) declares among the main elementary education objectives **the requirement to guide pupils towards an active development and protection of their physical, mental and social health**. The content, process and method related aspects of health education are mainly given attention in the FEP EE section entitled "Humans and Health". This education area brings some basic initiatives to promote good health (knowledge, activities, manners of behaviour) that pupils become familiar with, learn how to make use of them in their lives. The education in this area leads pupils to learning about themselves as live beings in the first place, to appreciating the value of health, the purpose of health prevention and the extent and depth of problems related to disease or other kinds of damage to health. Pupils become familiar with a range of dangers threatening health in common as well as unusual situations, acquire skills and behaviours (decision-making) that protect or improve health and develop the needed level of responsibility for their own and other people's health. Therefore, this for the large part involves exploration of fundamental life values, gradual forming of attitudes to them and active acting in accordance with them. The fulfilment of these aims needs to be based in elementary education on effective motivation and activities and situations encouraging the interest of pupils in problems relating to health.

Within the realization of the aforementioned tasks it is the practical skills and their usage in both model situations and everyday school life that need to be emphasized. Because of that it is very important that the whole school life is in harmony with what pupils learn about health and what they need to stay healthy. At the beginning, the education has to be strongly supported by the teacher's personal example, his versatile assistance and generally favourable atmosphere at school. Later, an emphasis is added on a greater amount of independence and responsibility in acting, decision-making and activities relating to health (FEP EE, 2005, p.72).

In terms of their conception, content and conclusions, the framework education programmes for secondary schools refer to the same-name sphere in elementary education ("Humans and Health" with the subjects "Health Education" and "Physical Training"). While elementary education was aimed at developing of a more individually perceived relation to health and learning about preventive protection of one's own health and safety, the secondary school education focuses more consistently on acquiring the ability to actively support and protect health within a broader community. As a result, a secondary school graduate should be prepared to follow, evaluate and within given possibilities resolve health and safety related situations that may relate to their future family, workplace or neighbourhood. An important role here is played by a greater ability of pupils to acquire information, analyze its content, verify (apply) the learned in practical activities, discuss problems arisen, their living, health effects on specific ac-

tivities. The realization of this education area, as compared with elementary education, draws much more on the independence of pupils, their active approach to problems in question, personal experience and views, but also on the conscious building of relationships with other people and the surrounding environment, greater responsibility for safety and health, organizational skills and suchlike.

The subject of “Health Education” should primarily have a practical and applicable content at the secondary school. In relation to education in natural and social sciences and using specific information about health it concentrates mainly on more in-depth learning about risk involving and risk-free behaviour (in partner relationships, parent roles, in contact with addictive and other harmful substances, under threat to safety) and on acquiring of practical steps suited for a versatile active support of personal as well as communal health.

The subject of “Physical Training” should aim for building a permanent relation of pupils to physical exercise and for optimum development of their physical, mental and social fitness. It is mainly based on a motivating atmosphere, pupils’ interest and their individual capabilities (possibilities). The educational process uses specific emotional experiences, social situations and bio-energetic loads in an individually created offer of physical activities (from wellness to competitive). From the life-long perspective, physical training focuses on giving pupils a better orientation as to the effects of exercise on health. It leads them to acquiring and regular practising of specific physical activities (fitness and compensatory programmes) suiting their physical exercise interests and health needs. The aspect of safety and accident prevention during exercise is always carefully considered. Great attention is given to the development of motor abilities as well as the correction of locomotory disadvantages (see the Framework education programme for grammar schools (FEP GS), 2007, pp. 56-62).

The aims and content of the elementary and secondary FEP education are further specified through profile topics and pupils’ key competences. Pupils’ health is particularly reflected in their social, personal and civic competences. The view of health problems should not be limited to just one subject, health support must permeate the whole education and a school regimen.

Apart from FEP EE and FEP GS programmes we also find other sources inspirational. While dealing with our partial topic we considered some relations between the class teacher’s activities and the tasks following from the ‘Healthy school - school supporting health’ project (hereinafter “Healthy school”). The basic conceptual and content related premises of “Healthy school” are called ‘three pillars’ (environmental well-being, healthy learning, open partnership) and further specified through nine principles (further below see Havlínová et al., 1998). Four of the aforementioned principles are very closely related to the social health aspects in the pupil education within the “Healthy school” project. The principle of social environment well-being consists in humanistic attitudes to one another, creating a positive climate in school, tolerance, patience and readiness to help. The well-being of organizational environment assumes that school activities are arranged in keeping with requirements of the daily regimen, i.e. alternation between work and rest, healthy diet and active physical exercise taken by children and their teacher. The principle of participation and cooperation anticipates the use of methods and forms of teaching that may bring democratic principles into play, as

well as effective cooperation and involvement of children, development of contacts with other social and professional partners - parents, representatives of public authorities and other institutions involved in education. The principle called School represents a model of democratic community anticipating the hierarchically arranged relationships to be transformed into the partnership ones that enable experiencing of democratic life within the school first, and later also outside of it.

We have given attention to several principles of the “Healthy School” project because a major part of the tasks relating to their implementation also has a close bearing on the class teacher work, which is not limited to just those involved in the project over long term. The comparison of the “Healthy School” premises with the FEP EE conception leads to the conclusion that both documents follow the same objectives, while each presents a specific education strategy. The “Healthy School” project defines health in its physical, psychological and social dimensions as the main and dominant goal. This is reflected in the mentoring and educational aspects of the whole project, while the mentoring considerations (accentuating personality and social development) have priority here. When comparing the “Healthy School” and the FEP EE programme, the latter presents a higher level of comprehensiveness (a good balance between the educational and the mentoring dimensions). FEP EE is an education programme implemented nationwide with a legislative and institutional support provided. The “Healthy School” project, seen at the time of its origin rather as one of the alternative educational possibilities, has in many ways been an inspiration to the authors of FEP EE and other framework educational programmes. Both these documents (“Healthy School” and FEP EE) reflect the global strategy of the World Health Organization which in its document ‘Health 21’ declared a long-term programme for a better health of people (hereinafter see Holčík, 2004).

## **What is the basic framework of the class teacher’s tasks regarding support of pupils’ health?**

The Ministry of Education ((MEYS, CR) documents specify the basic educational activities that form the content of work of class teachers. According to these materials the class teacher

- motivates creation of the class internal rules that conform to the school rules and takes care that they are followed (creation of open secure atmosphere and positive social climate in class); supports development of positive social interactions between classmates,
- mediates communication with the other staff members and is a guarantor of a school’s cooperation with parents of pupils in his class,
- he becomes acquainted with special personality traits of his pupils, their development and family background,
- cooperates with an education – career counsellor within provision of counselling on a suitable choice of further education and profession by his pupils,
- cooperates with a school prevention methodologist on identification of warning

signals, participates in implementation of a minimum preventive programme, diagnoses relationships in class,

- cooperates with a school psychologist / specialized teacher / within activities focused on school underachievement prevention (remedy, guidance etc.), creating conditions for integration of pupils with special educational needs in class and based on headteacher instructions also in other areas of educational and counselling work with his class. (*Ministry of Education Bulletin, 7/2005*)

Further duties of the class teacher are included in *MEYS methodical instruction ref. 10 007/98-26 providing for occupational safety and health protection in the regional school system*, that assign the class teacher to a duty to familiarize pupils with standard rules of safe behaviour, school rules, behaviour on public roads, fire protection rules, warn them against harmful effects of alcohol, smoking, making acquaintances with strangers etc. In this context, some competences of the class teacher are also set out by *MEYS methodical instruction ref. 28 275/2000-22 to prevent and deal with victimization among pupils of schools and school facilities* and *MEYS methodical instruction ref. 10 194/2002-14 on the unified procedure when releasing and excusing pupils from classes, prevention of and punishment for truancy*.

A complete summary of the MEYS documents concerned with mentoring/educational activities of class teachers is included in our study *Conditions for the class teachers' work with regard to affecting healthy development of their pupils* (see Střelec- Krátká, 2010).

The class teacher's duties and authorities are further set out and specified in greater detail by internal documents in individual schools, which reflect special conditions, the style of educational work and ideas of school management. Considering all that, the role of a class teacher is indubitably one of the most demanding in the teaching vocation.

## **Some views of class teachers on the ways to positively influence their pupils' health**

Given the limited space of the paper, we further only present a selection of the research results to illustrate with data the method application and its basic findings. At the same time we expect that those interested in more complete and detailed findings can use the studies referred to in the text and further publications that we are preparing in this field.

The pupils and students in Czech elementary and secondary schools are faced with a range of health risks, as already indicated by the aforementioned tasks and activities conducted by class teachers. **Our research study has set out to find out what level of importance respondents (class teachers and their pupils) attribute to the basic educational activities with regard to their influence on the pupils' physical, mental and social health.** Within the authors' (non-standardized) questionnaire the class teachers were asked a question: How can class teachers contribute to the physical, mental and social health of their pupils? The following variants of answers were offered:

- a) by individual solving of learning problems of pupils,
- b) by showing interest in their other problems, active involvement in their solution,

- c) by well-chosen communication,
- d) by recommending and creating opportunities for extracurricular activities of pupils,
- e) interest in social background of the pupil, communication with parents,
- f) by an example of the teacher's own lifestyle,
- g) creating a good social climate in class,
- h) keeping safety rules, discussing the danger of accidents.

Along with that a question was put to their pupils within another author's (non-standardized) questionnaire - What do you appreciate the most about your class teacher?

The following answer variants were offered for the question:

- a) suitable, friendly and straightforward behaviour,
- b) individual solution of your learning problems,
- c) showing interest in your other problems, active involvement in their solution,
- d) dedication with regard to extracurricular activities (e.g. educational trips, interest groups),
- e) interest in your family background, talking to parents,
- f) class teacher's way of life,
- g) takes care to create a good atmosphere in your class.

A system of scaling with a five-point numerical scale was used for each answer, from the value 1 (least important) to the value 5 (most important).

## **Research cohort, data processing and analysis**

The first cohort comprised altogether 240 (100 %) respondents, teachers of elementary and secondary schools. Of that 65 (27 %) were class teachers, who worked in this position at the 1st. level of elementary schools (ES) and 65 (27 %) class teachers at the 2nd ES level. Respondents from secondary schools were represented by 74 (46 %) class teachers at the grammar schools, vocational schools and industrial schools. Regarding the cohort's age groups, 4 % of class teachers were under the age of 25, 23 % at the age range 26 - 35, 60 % were aged 36 – 55 and 14 % were 56 and older. The study involved 56 (23 %) male class teachers and 184 (77 %) female class teachers.

The second cohort comprised altogether 248 (100 %) respondents, (elementary and secondary school students). The study involved 169 female pupils/students (69 %) and 79 male pupils/students (31 %). 141 (57 %) respondents attended elementary school and 107 (43 %) were secondary/industrial school students.

Results are presented mainly in relation to one specific independent variable, i.e. the type of school where the respondent is a class teacher. The collected data then can be interpreted in correlation with school type (ES: 1st. + 2nd. levels; SS (secondary schools): G+SŠ+SOU, where G = grammar school, SOU = industrial school), where the respondent was a class teacher. The above correlation has been followed as we expected some differences in views on the importance of a class teacher's activities at the elementary and secondary schools. The questions and answers in the questionnai-

re-based exploration have been adapted both in form and content to make them fully understandable for respondents and at the same time for the collected data to be possibly comparable.

Potential methodological difficulties included the rather small number of respondents, especially their non-representative selection, and further the structure of the scales used, whose comparison, though they were ordinal, was made using mean values. For purposes of analysis we treated these variables as quasi cardinal values, as this considerably simplifies the presentation of results and substantively does not involve a significant distortion. In our case, where we chose to select respondents based on availability, the reason for verification of statistical relevance is the comparison of a variance between cohorts and variability within cohorts according to independent variable categories, not the establishment of reliability in relation to general application to the target population. In order to enable processing it was necessary to operationalize the factual hypotheses as statistical hypotheses. Still we did not even verify the statistical hypothesis directly, we did so against a zero hypothesis instead, i.e. a supposition which employing statistical terms asserts that there is no relationships between the variables explored. Based on an appropriate test of relevance we have further decided that a specific research result is statistically significant, i.e. it is highly unlikely it could merely result from a coincidence. A frequent reason for verification of a result's statistical relevance is that it may enable a general application of findings to the complete basic cohort. In our case, where we chose to select respondents based on availability, the reason for verification of statistical relevance was to identify the variance between cohorts and variability within cohorts (for more details refer to Krátká, 2007; Krátká; Střelec, 2009).

## **Results and discussion**

Respondents answered the question concerning the relevance class teachers put down to individual educational processes through which they can enhance physical, mental and social health of their pupils, by using five-level scales from the lowest (1 – the least important) to the highest (5 – the most important) to assess (based on their experience as class teachers) the individual means and methods of educational influencing of pupils.

### **Individual solving of learning problems of pupils,**

Less than 1 % of the overall number of respondents assume that they only can very slightly enhance pupils' good health through individual dealing with their learning problems, 7 % of the respondents assume their possibilities of enhancing pupils' health in this way are rather small, 20 % only see a medium potential in this educational means (they checked the mean level 3); 37 % assume they can enhance their pupils' health to a large enough degree in this way (level 4) and 34 % of the respondents view class teachers' participation in individual dealing with pupils' problems as a very important (level 5) means of influencing pupils' healthy development. The mean value on the scale equals 3.97.

### **Showing interest in their pupils' other problems, active involvement in their solution**

Less than 2 % of the overall number of respondents assume that they only can very slightly enhance pupils' good health by their interest in their other (non-learning) problems, 6 % assume their possibilities of enhancing pupils' health in this way are rather small, 26 % only see a medium potential in this educational means (they checked the mean level 3); 38 % assume they can enhance their pupils' health in this way to a large enough degree (level 4) and 27 % of the respondents view class teachers' interest in the other problems of pupils and their own involvement in their solving as a very important (level 5) means of influencing pupils' healthy development. The mean value on the scale equals 3.81.

### **Suitable communication**

Less than 1 % of the overall number of respondents assume that they only can very slightly enhance pupils' good health through suitable communication, 2 % of the respondents assume their possibilities of enhancing pupils' health in this way are rather small, 10 % only see a medium potential in this educational means (they checked the mean level 3); 34 % assume they can enhance their pupils' health to a large enough degree by this (level 4) and 53 % of the respondents view class teachers' ability to aptly communicate with pupils as a very important (level 5) means of influencing pupils' healthy development. The mean value on the scale equals 4.37.

### **Recommending and creating opportunities for extracurricular activities of pupils**

Less than 3 % of the overall number of respondents assume that they only can very slightly enhance pupils' good health by their recommending and creating opportunities for pupils' extracurricular activities, 16 % of the respondents assume their possibilities of enhancing pupils' health in this way are rather small, 39 % only see a medium potential in this educational means (they checked the mean level 3); 25 % assume they can enhance their pupils' health to a large enough degree by this (level 4) and 17 % of the respondents view recommending and creating opportunities for pupils' extracurricular activities as a very important (level 5) means of influencing pupils' healthy development. The mean value on the scale equals 3.36.

### **Interest in social background of the pupil, communication with parents**

1 % of the overall number of respondents assume they only can very slightly enhance pupils' good healths by showing interest in pupils' social background and by communication with parents. 7 % of the respondents assume their possibilities of enhancing pupils' health in this way are rather small, 24 % only see a medium potential in this educational means (they checked the mean level 3); 39 % assume they can enhance their pupils' health to a large enough degree by this (level 4) and 29 % respondents view their interest in pupils' social background and communication with parents as a very important (level 5) means of influencing pupils' healthy development. The mean value on the scale equals 3.88.



### **By Example of the teacher's own lifestyle**

1 % of the overall number of respondents assume that they only can very slightly enhance pupils' good health by providing their own lifestyles as examples, 9 % of the respondents assume their possibilities of enhancing pupils' health in this way are rather small, 26 % only see a medium potential in this educational means (they checked the mean level 3); 29 % assume they can enhance their pupils' health to a large enough degree by this (level 4) and 35 % of the respondents view the providing of their own lifestyles as examples as a very important (level 5) means of influencing pupils' healthy development. The mean value on the scale equals 3.86.

### **Creating a good social climate in class,**

Less than 1 % of the overall number of respondents assume that they only can very slightly enhance pupils' good health through creating a good social climate in class, 2 % of the respondents assume their possibilities of enhancing pupils' health in this way are rather small, 8 % only see a medium potential in this educational means (they checked the mean level 3); 27 % assume they can enhance their pupils' health to a large enough degree by doing that (level 4) and 63 % of the respondents attribute a great importance (level 5) to creating a good social climate in class with regard to influencing pupils' healthy development. The mean value on the scale equals 4.5.

### **Keeping safety rules, discussing the danger of accidents.**

1 % of the overall number of respondents assume that they only can very slightly enhance pupils' good health by keeping the safety rules and discussing the danger of accidents, 7 % of the respondents assume their possibilities of enhancing pupils' health in this way are rather small, 22 % only see a medium potential in this educational means (they checked the mean level 3); 21 % assume they can enhance their pupils' health to a large enough degree by this (level 4) and 49 % of the respondents view the keeping of safety rules and discussing the danger of accidents as a very important (level 5) means of influencing pupils' healthy development. The mean value on the scale equals 4.1.

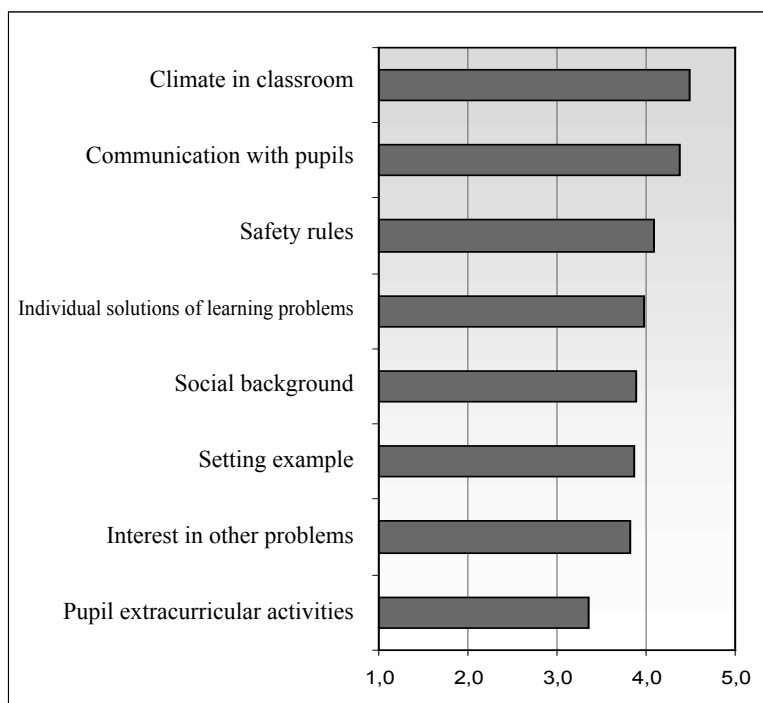


Diagram no.1 - By means of the mean values on the scale the spheres are compared in which, as respondents believe, class teachers can enhance their pupils' health:

It follows from the results of the first study the respondents (class teachers) value the creating of a good social climate in class as the most powerful means within their activities as class teachers and their share in enhancing pupils' health ( mean value 4.5 on the five-point scale). The second most important means is a suitable communication with pupils (4.37), followed by keeping the safety rules, discussing the danger of accidents (4,1), individual solving of pupils' learning problems (3.97), interest in pupils' social background and communication with parents (3,88), providing the teacher's lifestyle as an example (3.86), showing interest in pupils' other problems, active involvement in their solution (3.81), and finally recommending and creating opportunities for extracurricular activities of pupils (3.36) closes the list. The above results essentially correspond with our expectations and testify to some extent to the predominant methods of the frontal educational influencing of a school class as a whole and, on the other hand, the less frequently used individual educational contacts with individual pupils. This tendency goes back, in our opinion, to the traditions of Czech schooling and is also encouraged by the present conditions for class teachers' work at the elementary and secondary schools.

# Relationship between the type of school and the views of respondents (class teachers) on how they can enhance their pupils' health

*H1 Class teachers from the different types of school attach different degrees of importance to the spheres in which they can contribute to their pupils' health.*

There have been zero and alternative hypotheses formulated of the relationship between the class teachers' views on the ways to enhance pupils' health and the types of school where they work as class teachers:

$H_0$  = no relationship between the frequency of class teachers' answers to particular questions and the type of school where they work as class teachers.

$H_0$  = there is a relationship between the frequency of class teachers' answers to given questions and the type of school where they work as class teachers.

A partial rejection of the zero hypothesis of non-existence of differences between the answers to a particular question and the type of school where a class teacher works, is due to the following results of the non-parametric analysis of variance, comparing multiple mean values (Kruskal-Wallis) which have shown that statistically significant differences exist between the answers of respondents from individual types of schools, namely between the recommending and creating opportunities for pupils' extracurricular activities, the keeping of safety rules and discussing the danger of accidents, creating a good social climate in class and a suitable communication.

Table no.1 There is a statistically significant relationship between the type of school and the views of class teachers on the spheres (marked in bold) where they can enhance their pupils' health:

Test of significance of differences based on type of school		
	KRUSKAL - WALLIS TEST	
<b>extracurricular</b>	sig. H0	<b>0.003</b>
interest in problems	sig. H0	0.232
provide one's own example	sig. H0	0.585
social background	sig. H0	0.125
individual	sig. H0	0.072
<b>safety rules</b>	sig. H0	<b>0.001</b>
<b>communication</b>	sig. H0	<b>0.019</b>
<b>climate in class</b>	sig. H0	<b>0.002</b>

(A significance value lower than 0.05 causes the zero hypothesis of the same mean values to be ruled out.)

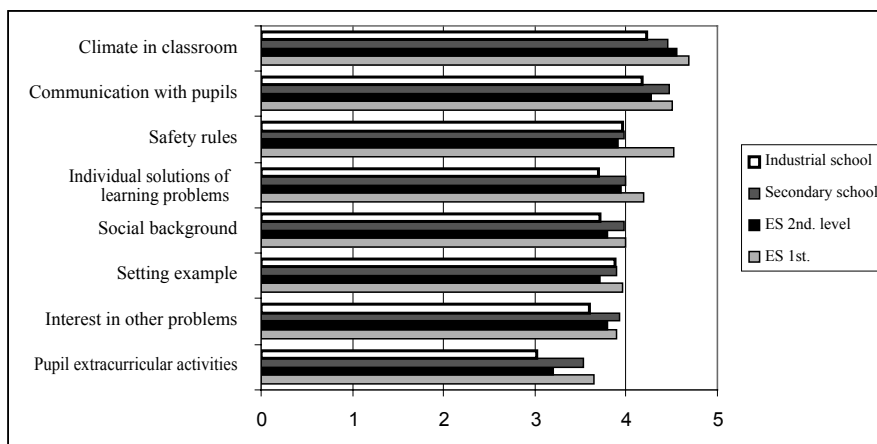


Diagram no.2 - Relationship between the type of school and the views of respondents (class teachers) on how they can enhance their pupils' health is compared by means of the mean values on the scale

(see Střelec- Krátká, 2006).

Respondents' answers in relation to the type of school where they teach show statistically significant differences. The results of the non-parametric analysis of variance (Kruskal-Wallis Test) shows among other things that a positive social climate in the classroom (in relation to healthy development of children) is valued the highest by the class teachers at the primary level of elementary schools and then its assessed value gradually decreases at elementary schools, secondary schools and finally industrial schools with the lowest value attached. Also this correlation indirectly reflects pupils' ages (levels of their physical, mental and social maturity). This is shown e.g. in relation to pupils' assessment of a class teacher's activities associated with recommending and creating opportunities for extracurricular activities of pupils, when assessing a class teacher's interest in a pupil's social background and his/her communication with pupils' parents.

## The class teacher's activities as seen by pupils

### How pupils evaluate a suitable, friendly and straightforward behaviour of their class teacher

The pupils' answers show that 14 % of them assess a suitable, friendly and straightforward behaviour of their class teacher with the lowest value (1); the same number of pupils (14 %) assigned the second lowest value (2) to the aforementioned activities. 29 % of pupils use a medium value to assess a suitable, friendly and straightforward behaviour of their class teacher; 18 % selected a value of 4 and 26 % used the highest value of 5 to assess such behaviour. The mean value on the scale equals 3.28.

### **How pupils evaluate their class teacher's endeavour to individually solve their learning problems**

The pupils' answers show that 13 % of them assess their class teacher's endeavour to individually solve their learning problems with the lowest value (1); 18 % assigned the second lowest value (2) to the aforementioned activities. 30 % of pupils use a medium value to assess their class teacher's endeavour to individually solve their learning problems; 24 % selected a value of 4 and 15 % used the highest value of 5 to assess such behaviour. The mean value on the scale equals 3.10.

### **How pupils evaluate their class teacher's interest in their other problems, active involvement in their solution**

The pupils' answers show that 23 % of them assess their class teacher's interest in their other problems, active involvement in their solution with the lowest value (1); 21 % assigned the second lowest value (2) to the aforementioned activities. 29 % of pupils use a medium value to assess their class teacher's interest in their other problems, active involvement in their solution; 17 % selected a value of 4 and 10 % used the highest value of 5 to assess such behaviour. The mean value on the scale equals 2.69.

### **How pupils evaluate their class teacher's dedication with regard to extracurricular activities (e.g. trips, interest groups)**

The pupils' answers show that 23 % of them assess their class teacher's dedication to extracurricular activities with the lowest value (1); 18 % assigned the second lowest value (2) to the aforementioned activities. 22% of pupils use a medium value to assess their class teacher's dedication to extracurricular activities; 16 % selected a value of 4 and 22 % used the highest value of 5 to assess such behaviour. The mean value on the scale equals 2.96.

### **How pupils evaluate their class teacher's interest in their family background, talking to parents**

The pupils' answers show that 32 % of them assess their class teacher's interest in their family background, talking to parents with the lowest value (1); 28 % assigned the second lowest value (2) to the aforementioned activities. 19 % of pupils use a medium value to assess their class teacher's interest in their family background, talking to parents; 14 % selected a value of 4 and 8 % used the highest value of 5 to assess such behaviour. The mean value on the scale equals 2.38.

### **How pupils evaluate their class teacher's way of life (class teacher as an example)**

The pupils' answers show that 25 % of them assess their class teacher as setting an example with the lowest value (1); 13 % assigned the second lowest value (2) to the aforementioned qualities. 15 % of pupils use a medium value to assess their class teacher's way of life; 15 % selected a value of 4 and 22 % used the highest value of 5 to assess this quality in their teacher. The mean value on the scale equals 2.96.

## How pupils evaluate their class teacher's endeavour to create a good climate in the classroom

The pupils' answers show that 10 % of them assess their class teacher's endeavour to create a good climate with the lowest value (1); 12 % assigned the second lowest value (2) to the aforementioned endeavour. 25% of pupils use a medium value to assess their class teacher's endeavour to create a good climate in the classroom; 16 % selected a value of 4 and 37 % used the highest value of 5 to assess this quality in their teacher. The mean value on the scale equals 3.59.

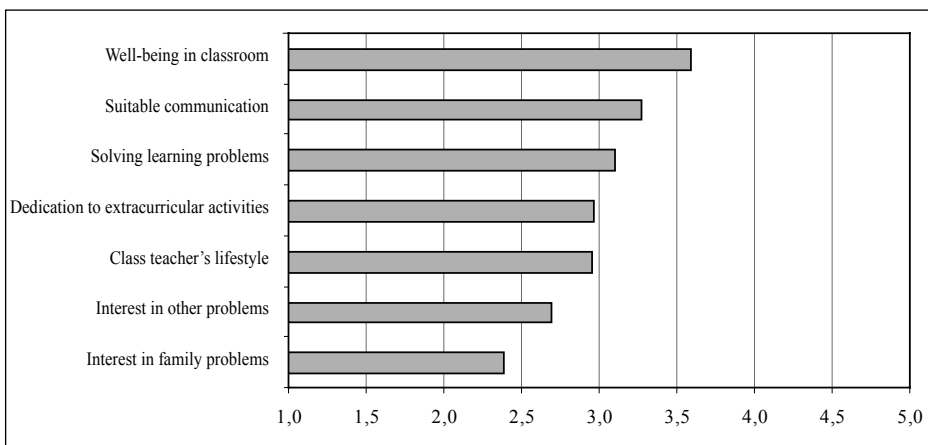


Diagram no. 3 Using the mean values on the scale it is illustrated how pupils evaluate their class teacher's qualities (activities) involved in enhancing their health:

It follows from the results of the second study the respondents (elementary and secondary school students) considering the qualities, abilities and skills of their class teachers value the most their endeavour to create a good climate in the classroom (mean value of 3.59 on the five-point scale). The other examined aspects were assessed as follows: suitable, friendly and straightforward behaviour (3.28), Individual solving of learning problems (3.10), class teacher's dedication to extracurricular activities and his/her lifestyle (both 2.96), interest in pupils' other problems (2.69) and interest in their family background including communication with parents (2.38).

## Relationship between characteristics and activities that pupils appreciate about their class teacher and the type of school they attend

*H1 Students from different types of schools appreciate different characteristics and activities about their class teachers.*

There have been zero and alternative hypotheses formulated as regards differences in evaluating the class teacher's characteristics and activities in relation to type of school:  
 $H_0 =$  no relationship between the frequency of students' answers to particular questions

and the type of school they attend

$H_0$  = there is a relationship between the frequency of students' answers to particular questions and the type of school they attend

A zero hypothesis, i.e. non-existence of differences between the answers to a specific question in relation to the type of school the pupil attends, was ruled out based on the following results of a non-parametric test comparing two mean values (Mann-Whitney Test U) which have shown that statistically significant differences exist between the answers by respondents from different types of schools to all the characteristics of a class teacher having to do with influencing pupils' health.

Table no.2 - There is a statistically significant relationship between the type of school and the spheres assessed (highlighted in bold), that pupils value in connection with their class teacher:

Test of significance of differences based on type of school		
	MANN-WHITNEY TEST U	
<b>you evaluate: suitable behaviour</b>	sig. $H_0$	<b>0.001</b>
<b>you evaluate: solving of learning problems</b>	sig. $H_0$	<b>0.034</b>
<b>you evaluate: interest in other problems</b>	sig. $H_0$	<b>0.012</b>
<b>you evaluate: dedication to extracur. activities</b>	sig. $H_0$	<b>0.000</b>
<b>you evaluate: interest in family problems</b>	sig. $H_0$	<b>0.000</b>
<b>you evaluate: lifestyle</b>	sig. $H_0$	<b>0.000</b>
<b>you evaluate: well-being in classroom</b>	sig. $H_0$	<b>0.000</b>

(see Střelec- Krátká, 2008).

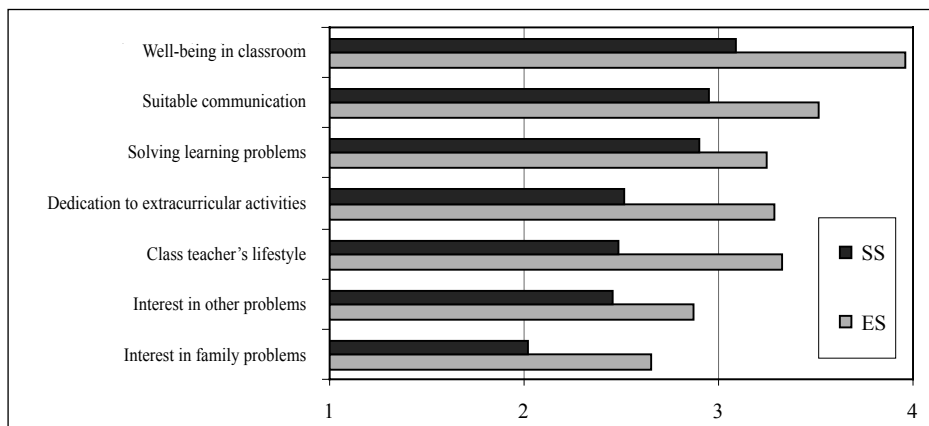


Diagram no. 4 shows mean values of relationship between characteristics and activities that pupils appreciate about their class teacher and type of school they attend

Respondents' answers in relation to the type of school they attend show statistically significant differences. The results of the non-parametric variance analysis (Kruskal-Wallis Test) show among other things that ES pupils appreciate all the offered characteristics of a class teacher to a significantly larger degree than SS students. In this sense also the second hypothesis has been adopted.

## Conclusion:

The presented (illustrative) empirical findings do not lay claim to the general validity and the data selected rather provides orienting evidence (through respondent views - class teachers and students') of a significant role of the class teacher in supporting the healthy development of elementary and secondary pupils/students. Still the above facts testify to the important role of a class teacher in the present-day Czech school system.

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# **SPECIFIKACE PODPORY ZDRAVÍ ŽÁKŮ PŘI ČINNOSTECH TŘÍDNÍHO UČITELE NA ZÁKLADNÍ A STŘEDNÍ ŠKOLE**

**Abstrakt:** Třídní učitel je činitel, který disponuje možnostmi pro ovlivňování zdravého duševního, tělesného i sociálního vývoje jednotlivých žáků a školní třídy. Činnosti třídního učitele mají na každém stupni školního vzdělávání nejen své opodstatnění, ale také zvláštnosti vyplývající z pedagogicko-psychologických charakteristik žáka určitého věku a úrovně jeho psychické, fyzické a sociální zralosti. V tomto smyslu se příspěvek zabývá vymezením rámce činností podporujících zdraví žáků na základní a střední škole, srovnává názory třídních učitelů na ovlivňování zdravého vývoje žáků a specifikuje některé další podmínky pro práci třídních učitelů na těchto stupních školního vzdělávání. Studie navazuje na výzkumná zjištění autorů publikovaná v období 2006–2010.

**Klíčová slova:** výzkumné poznatky, základní škola, střední škola, třídní učitel, podpora zdraví, výchovné činnosti, názory respondentů