

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 22 August 2019

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Tackling Bullying in Renfrewshire's Schools

1. Summary

- 1.1. Renfrewshire Council is committed to the personal and social wellbeing of all children and young people. The current Tackling Bullying policy was approved by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 23 August 2018.
 - 1.2. The policy applies to all educational establishments and settings and to all practitioners, including community learning and development and out of school care services and partners in the private and third sector who work in partnership with Renfrewshire Council to uphold the spirit of the policy.
 - 1.3. Each of our primary and secondary schools will have its own policy which reflects the service-wide policy but provides more information on the actions being taken in their school. These have been developed in consultation with pupils and parents.
 - 1.4. Since the 2017/18 session, Renfrewshire schools have adopted electronic recording and monitoring of bullying incidents. This is providing more detailed information than the annual counts undertaken previously.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Elected members are asked to:
 - note the contents of this report.

3. Background

- 3.1 Renfrewshire's policy on anti-bullying provides guidance to staff, parents, carers, children and young people on the prevention, identification and management of bullying, this relates to both bullying behaviour and the impact it has.
- 3.2 The focus for the policy is to help all our establishments create environments where bullying cannot thrive. Our aim continues to be supporting the development of respectful relationships amongst children and young people in Renfrewshire. The policy includes specific reference to equality and prejudice-based bullying behaviours and online bullying.

4. Development of local policies

- 4.1 Each primary and secondary school in Renfrewshire is expected to have its own policy on tackling bullying; these should reflect the corporate policy but be tailored to the needs and community of each school.
- 4.2 Almost all schools have now completed local policies, and these reflect consultation with pupils and parents. Those outstanding are expected to be completed early in the new academic session.

5. Bullying statistics 2018-19

- 5.1 It is essential that all educational establishments and settings are alert to alleged bullying behaviours and are vigilant in identifying allegations and incidents of bullying behaviours, ensuring they are dealt with and recorded. Every educational establishment and setting will be required to update the school's information management system (SEEMIS) when incidents occur to allow the head teachers and Children's Services to monitor trends.
- 5.2 Supportive guidance for schools was issued in May 2018 by The Scottish Government titled 'Recording and Monitoring of Bullying Incidents in Schools'. This was developed by a sub-group of Scottish Government, Education Scotland and other stakeholders. The SEEMIS Bullying & Equalities module is seen as the most appropriate tool for schools and local authorities to monitor and record bullying. Renfrewshire Council implemented this module in August 2017.
- 5.3 One of the aims of the revised bullying policy and the roll-out of school-specific policies was to increase awareness of what bullying behaviour looks like, and encourage more people to report bullying behaviour. Throughout the consultation on new policies, children and young people discussed what they thought bullying was, and what they would do if they saw bullying taking place.

- 5.4 As a consequence of awareness-raising work and improved recording processes, a rise in the number of reported incidents was expected. Only by recognising bullying incidents can action be taken to reduce them. In 2018/19, 141 incidents were reported across Renfrewshire schools, including 3 which were unfounded. Schools will record all incidents at the point of reporting and thereafter investigate them. The majority of incidents involve name-calling and teasing.
- 5.5 The number of cyberbullying incidents reported in school remains low, with only 7 during 2018/19 compared with 6 in 2016/17.
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6. Monitoring

- 6.1 Bullying statistics will continue to be monitored by the Extended Senior Leadership Team in Children's Services.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
 - Building strong, safe and resilient communities – Implementation of the policy supports vulnerable children and young people and minimise potential harm arising from bullying behaviours.
 - Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all – Implementation of the policy supports us to continue to address inequalities, through the recognition of the harmful effects of bullying behaviour and the promotion of restorative approaches.
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** – None
7. **Equality & Human Rights** The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** - None
9. **Procurement** – None
10. **Risk** – None
11. **Privacy Impact** – The process for recording bullying incidents is now electronic rather than paper-based. The SEEMIS system is secure and parents have consented to pupil information being held there.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None
13. **Climate Risk** - None.

List of Background Papers

None

LF/GMcK
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