

Working Group on Recording and Monitoring Bullying Incidents in Schools

Recommendations

Background

The importance of recording and monitoring incidents of bullying has always been an important element of addressing bullying behaviour and this was highlighted in the 'National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People' (2010).

'.....Accurately recording incidents of bullying allows organisations to ensure that appropriate response and follow up has been issued. It helps the organisation to monitor the effectiveness of its policy and practice and can also help identify a need for training.....'

.....The recording, monitoring and analysis of bullying is best carried out locally where it can be understood and acted upon by local organisations; as well as providing feedback on the effectiveness of anti-bullying policy and practice'

In November 2017, the Scottish Government published updated anti-bullying guidance '[Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People](#)'. This guidance is for everyone working with children and young people and provides a holistic approach to anti-bullying. The approach forms part of our wider attempts to improve the health and wellbeing of our children and young people. It fits in with our ongoing work to ensure children and young people feel safe and secure and are able to build up strong and positive relationships with their peers and with adults as well as our work to promote positive behaviour. Advice on recording and monitoring of bullying incidents was strengthened in this guidance:

'It is crucial that organisations monitor the effectiveness of their policy and practice, and review and update their policy on a regular basis. Monitoring bullying incidents is essential and helps organisations identify recurring patterns thereby encouraging early intervention. This can help identify training (CLPL) needs for everyone working with children and young people.....'

.....We recognise that streamlined and uniformed recording and monitoring by local authorities and schools will help to identify key measures and actions that can be undertaken to address incidents of bullying. We are working with local authority representatives, teacher organisations and key stakeholder bodies to develop a universal approach to recording and monitoring incidents of bullying in Scottish schools.

Within 'Respect for All' there was a commitment to develop additional guidance to complement 'Respect for All' which sets out a consistent approach for local authorities and schools to adopt for recording and monitoring incidents of bullying.

Following the publication of the guidance, a Recording and Monitoring Working Group was established in December 2017. The purpose of the group was to develop a consistent and uniform approach to recording and monitoring that all schools and local authorities could adopt using the Bullying and Equalities module within SEEMiS, the schools' information management system.

The Working Group considered what changes were required to be made to the Bullying and Equalities module and worked closely with SEEMiS colleagues to update the module. The group was also tasked with producing supportive guidance for local authorities and schools on recording and monitoring bullying incidents.

In addition, the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Right Committee (EHRiC) published their report in summer 2017, 'It's not Cool to be Cruel: Prejudice-based bullying and harassment of children and young people in school'. Within this report there was a specific recommendation around recording and monitoring of bullying incidents in schools:

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We ask the Scottish Government to make it a requirement for every education authority in Scotland to collect and monitor school bullying incidents and to record specifically incidents of prejudice-based bullying. We ask the Scottish Government to ensure consistency by prescribing the type of data recorded. If necessary such a requirement could be placed on a statutory footing. We also believe data collected should be shared with other agencies involved in reducing prejudice-based bullying.

Scottish Government Response:

The Scottish Government agrees with the recommendation to introduce a new requirement for local authorities and schools to record specific information on bullying incidents. It will take forward work with COSLA and ADES to identify how best to do this.

The Scottish Government supports the sharing of data for improvement purposes at the school and local authority level where data sharing agreements are in place and where it helps the development of detailed improvement action.

The Working Group have come up with a number of recommendations which are outlined below:

Recommendations

1. The Working Group recommend that the Deputy First Minister write to local authorities about the new approach to recording and monitoring of bullying incidents in schools, and issue the supportive guidance produced by the Working Group.
2. The Working Group recommend that an Operational Support Group should be established. This group will be made up of local authority representatives, Education Scotland, Trade Union representatives, Scottish Government and *respectme*. The group will be chaired by a representative from ADES. The group will support the phased approach and support and monitor schools and LA's throughout the pilot and full implementation.
3. The Working Group recommend that the pilot of the updated recording and monitoring system should be on a phased approach throughout the academic year 2018/19 starting in August and will be fully implemented the following year.
4. The Working Group recommend that changes agreed by the Working Group to the SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities module are implemented. This will also be on a phased basis. The supporting Technical Guidance and training video should also be updated for the start of the new academic year by SEEMiS. Local authority officers who are have responsibility for SEEMiS, may provide appropriate support and additional training where required. All Trade Unions should be involved at local authority level in discussions around providing this training.
5. The Working Group should continue to meet on a six monthly basis, the role of the group will be to support the process. The Operational Support Group will provide an update to the Working Group on a six monthly basis.
6. The Working Group recommend that an evaluation should be undertaken once full implementation has been embedded across local authorities. The evaluation will assess how successfully the new system for recording and monitoring bullying incidents in schools has been introduced.
7. Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), Education Scotland and *respectme* will work closely with Independent Schools to ensure that consistent messages about importance of recording and monitoring are communicated to all Independent Schools.