

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201301049, A Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** secondary school  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C's child was a pupil at a school and was the target of a bullying incident. The school investigated, and suspended two pupils as a result of their enquiries. Ms C's child continued to feel intimidated by one of the pupils and became unwell, resulting in an absence from school. Ms C, the school and the council were all involved in trying to find a way to help her child return to school, and a number of measures were introduced to stop further bullying. Ms C's child went back to school but, after further incidents, Ms C was not satisfied that the measures protected her child and decided to request a place at another school.

Ms C complained to us that the council failed to respond reasonably to her concerns about engagement and communication with her and her child. She also complained that they did not follow anti-bullying policies and procedures. Our investigation upheld both of Ms C's complaints. We found that, although the council were willing to engage with her and had suggested positive steps such as mediation, they had not always taken her child's views into account and had not adequately documented their decision-making process. We also found that they failed to record bullying incidents in line with the anti-bullying policy.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- keep a clear record showing what factors have been considered when making decisions such as inviting to meetings parents with whom children have no contact;
- ensure that staff at the school are aware of the Scottish Government's GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) policy and its aims;
- apologise to Ms C and her child for failing to record reported incidents in line with the relevant policy;
- carry out an audit of the school's recording of bullying incidents to establish whether all incidents are being appropriately recorded in line with policy; and
- ensure that, at the next revision of the anti-bullying policy, the national approach to anti-bullying is referenced and taken into account.