

SPSO decision report

Case: 201405859, Aberdeen City Council
Sector: local government
Subject: secondary school
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about how the council dealt with bullying at her child's school. Mrs C said that the head teacher had shown a lack of care towards her child, that their ineffective action led to the continued bullying of her child and that the anti-bullying policy was not well advertised. The council did not uphold her complaints about the school's lack of care or advertising of the policy, although they partially upheld the complaint that ineffective action led to continued bullying.

We considered two complaints from Mrs C. These were that reported bullying incidents were not dealt with effectively and that effective measures were not taken to protect her child in line with the anti-bullying policy. We found that the school had taken appropriate steps to investigate the reported bullying incidents and that this action was in line with their anti-bullying policy. There was no evidence that there had been a lack of care in this regard and we did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint. We upheld Mrs C's second complaint regarding the effectiveness of action taken as we found that the council had identified failings and that there were some issues with how reported bullying incidents had been recorded. There was no evidence that the anti-bullying policy was not advertised, but we did consider that it may have been beneficial to have drawn it to the attention of Mrs C when she first reported the bullying of her child.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- issue Mrs C with a written apology for the issues identified during their investigation of the effectiveness of action taken by the school;
- update us on the outcome of the recommendations made to the school following the council's investigation and how these have addressed the issues identified;
- consider the potential benefits of drawing the school's policy to the attention of parents reporting bullying incidents; and
- review how the available electronic resources are used to record and track bullying incidents, including those reported by parents or some time after the event itself.