

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201502712, Inverclyde Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** secondary school  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about how school staff handled a report of bullying of her daughter. While Mrs C was satisfied with the handling of the matter at the time, she became concerned some months later when the pupils involved in the bullying behaviour were given additional opportunities within the school. She raised this with the school, as she thought that the bullying incident had been recorded on the pupils' education record, but the school told her the bullying was only recorded on the school's bullying log. Mrs C was dissatisfied with this, and she was also concerned that the school referred to the incident as an 'allegation of bullying' in their later correspondence with her, whereas she thought it had been agreed that bullying had occurred.

The council said the school handled the incident appropriately and in line with their bullying policy (which encourages a restorative approach). We asked the council to clarify whether they had found that bullying had occurred as this was not clear from the bullying log, and they confirmed that the incident had been recorded as one of bullying behaviour.

After investigating the matter, we upheld Mrs C's complaint. We found that staff complied with most aspects of the school's and the council's policies, including involving parents, arranging a restorative meeting and supporting Mrs C's daughter. However, the bullying log completed by the school did not match the form set out in the council's policy, so there was no detailed contemporaneous record of the investigation and findings. We also found that staff did not appear to be familiar with the school's bullying policy which required the incident to be recorded on the pupils' records, and they were following the council's bullying policy instead (which did not include this requirement).

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Mrs C and her daughter for failing to comply with some aspects of their policies in responding to their concerns about bullying; and
- review the school's bullying policy and reporting forms, to ensure that there is clear and consistent guidance on this process (and that this complies with the council's bullying policy and templates).