

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201508653, Renfrewshire Council  
**Sector:** local government  
**Subject:** secondary school  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained that the council failed to comply with their bullying policy. Mrs C had raised issues with the council in relation to her daughter (Miss A) being bullied at school. The council explained that they had not initially treated the issues raised by Mrs C as bullying. They provided logs detailing concern by Mrs C that Miss A was being bullied and outlined the action taken by the school.

Mrs C was also concerned that Miss A was not given a suitable room on a school trip in light of problems with bullying and that the council had not looked into why her daughter had slept outside her room. In their response, the council provided a copy of the risk assessment that detailed that spot-checks would be carried out. However, there was no record detailing these checks. Although the council apologised to Mrs C that the information she provided prior to the trip had not been passed on to staff, we were concerned that there was no record of conversations with staff members. We therefore upheld these elements of Mrs C's complaint.

Mrs C also complained that the school did not provide accurate information on whether the school operated a buddy system. The council acknowledged and apologised for this and we therefore upheld Mrs C's complaint.

Mrs C said that the council failed to keep reasonable care records. The council said they were satisfied that Miss A's notes contained sufficient information. However, we found in particular that they did not include a record of a pre-arranged meeting. We therefore upheld Mrs C's complaint.

Mrs C also complained that staff at Miss A's school had inappropriate conversations with Miss A. While we were satisfied with the way the council had acknowledged the concerns Mrs C raised with them in this regard and had apologised, on balance we upheld Mrs C's complaint.

Finally, Mrs C complained that the council did not handle her complaint or communicate with her reasonably. The council said that it was difficult to communicate reasonably as Mrs C had raised her complaints with a number of people. They said they would offer Mrs C an additional apology in relation to this. The council also accepted that there had been a delay outwith their own timescales in responding to Mrs C's complaint. In light of this, we upheld this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- consider their procedures for organising school trips to ensure all relevant information is recorded and taken into consideration when organising a school trip;
- consider, in view of the issues raised in this complaint, whether there is a need for a formal record of the checks carried out on pupils during bed times;
- ensure that relevant staff are fully aware of all the strategies, including the buddy system, that are available to assist pupils experiencing difficulties; and

- consider the benefits of retaining a brief record or note of meetings with parents, in particular when these are pre-arranged.