

## Renfrewshire Council

To: Education Policy Board

On: 17 January 2008

Report by  
Director of Education and Leisure

### TACKLING BULLYING IN RENFREWSHIRE SCHOOLS: PROGRESS REPORT 2006-07

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1 This is the fifth annual report on tackling bullying in Renfrewshire. It contains background information on bullying, progress achieved in the school session 2006-07 and current and historical data on incidents of bullying.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the lifelong learning and work policy board are requested to:
- i) acknowledge the good work being carried out to deal with bullying; and
  - ii) note the data which has been collected using standardised monitoring forms and its relationship to the data previously reported.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour through which an individual or groups of individuals feel threatened, abused or undermined by another individual or group of individuals. Bullying is behaviour which can be defined as a repeated attack of a physical, psychological, social or verbal nature by those who are able to exert influence over others.
- 3.2 At national level, there has been considerable and increased concern in recent years about the subject of bullying. Since this is an issue which can affect people at varying stages of their lives, all organisations are expected to have an anti-bullying policy which is known to all. Within schools this includes staff, parents and pupils. School policies acknowledge the threat which bullying represents to the education and well-being of many pupils. There is clear evidence that bullying continues to be prevalent and a major cause of distress for children and young people.

- 3.3 The Anti-bullying Network, set up by the Scottish Executive in 1999, supported the work of local authorities until February 2007. *Respectme*, Scotland's anti-bullying service which replaced the Anti-Bullying Network, was launched in March 2007. The focus of *Respectme* is to tackle bullying in the community as well as in schools.
- 3.4 Within schools, the development of anti-bullying strategies is the responsibility of the whole school community, including staff, pupils and parents, under the co-ordination of the head teacher.
- 3.5 In addition to ensuring that the curriculum addresses issues of discrimination and equality, it is also important to ensure that the ethos of the school gives positive messages to staff, pupils, parents and the local community. Schools strive to ensure that everyone within the school community and visitors are welcome, are treated with respect, and that they feel safe in all parts of the building.
- 3.6 Improvement in behaviour cannot be achieved by simply drawing up a policy since the groundwork for such improvements lies in:
- developing a shared understanding of the value system within which the school operates;
  - the quality of learning and teaching which takes place; and
  - effective school management, recognising the necessity for the development of good relationships.
- 3.7 It is also important that bullying is seen not as a separate issue, but as one aspect of unacceptable behaviour which impinges directly on the educational well-being of both victim and bully. Any appropriate strategies for addressing bullying should sit within the overall approach to supporting all children and young people.
- 3.8 Anti-bullying strategies form part of a school's overall policy on discipline. The main purpose behind any policy on managing pupil behaviour is to create an ethos in which effective teaching and learning takes place in a safe, supportive environment in a climate of mutual trust and respect.
- 3.9 The policy statement *Tackling Bullying in Renfrewshire* provides guidance to schools. The procedures to be followed are based on existing good practice and draw on current educational research and established staff development materials.

#### **4. Progress on Tackling Bullying in Renfrewshire**

- 4.1 Implementation of the policy continues with the following tasks achieved in 2006/07:
- Continued publicity in the local newspapers, the council tax wall planner and a St Mirren celebration booklet helped maintain the profile of the Renfrewshire policy; and
  - The fourth set of annual monitoring data gathered from the revised monitoring form has been received from schools.

- 4.2 Incidents of bullying have been recorded between August and June annually, since school session 2002/2003.

Table I

Sector	School Roll 2006/07 Census data	Incidents					Number of incidents per 1000 pupils				
		2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Primary	13,357	158	138	68	71	80	11	9.65	4.88	5.22	5.99
Secondary	11,368	273	566	114	64	51	23.1	47.98	9.78	5.56	4.49
Special	299	0	0	1	4	3	0	0	3.29	13.38	10.03

- 4.3 The information for 2002/03 was collected in retrospect as part of a baseline exercise. The information for the subsequent years was collected by schools throughout the session and reported on the standard monitoring form which was distributed to all schools as part of the policy, Tackling Bullying in Renfrewshire.
- 4.4 The number of reported incidents in primary schools has risen over the last three years, while the number of reported incidents in secondary schools continues to decrease. There is a concern that this may be due to inconsistencies in reporting. This will be investigated during the course of the next school session
- 4.5 The reduction in incidents in special schools is noted. However, the numbers involved are too small for trends to be significant.
- 4.6 As well as recording the number of incidents, schools were asked to record the number of incidents for which the target of completing the investigation within 3 days was met. The data for 2006/07 in each sector is shown below in table II. The comparable figures for 2003/04 and 2004/05 and 2005/06 are given in brackets.

Table II

Sector	Incidents investigated within 3 days 2006/07 (2003/04, 2004/05, 2005/06)	
	number	percentage
Primary	75 (130, 56, 71)	93.75 (94.2, 82.35, 100)
Secondary	48 (562, 114, 59)	94.11 (99.29, 100, 92.18)
Special	3 (0, 1, 4)	100 (N/A, 100, 100)

- 4.7 It should be noted that the length of time taken to investigate an incident is dependent on its complexity and the availability of witnesses. It is therefore unlikely that all investigations can be completed within the 3 day target.

## Implications of this Report

1. **Financial Implications** - None

2. **Personnel Implications** - None

3. **Community Plan Implications**

**Social inclusion** - Tackling bullying incidents in schools is important in creating an atmosphere in which all pupils can thrive and take the maximum benefit from the learning opportunities available to them.

**Modernising government** - Working in partnership with the whole school community, pupils, staff, parents is an important element of tackling bullying in Renfrewshire.

**Sustainable development** - Tackling bullying in schools leads to improved relationships between individuals and groups contributing to sustainable communities.

4. **Legal Implications** - None

5. **Property Implications** - None

6. **Information Technology Implications** - None

7. **Equal Opportunities Implications** -

Racism is a particular form of bullying. Tackling racist incidents in schools will contribute to making our schools and the services they provide, equally accessible to all of our pupils.