

ANGUS COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

REPORT BY KELLY MCINTOSH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report outlines Angus Council's policy on preventing and responding to bullying amongst children and young people in Angus Schools and Early Learning and Child Care Settings.

'Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face-to-face and online'.

(Respect for All, 2017)

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approves the revised Anti-Bullying Policy for Schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings in Angus.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

- The best start in life for children
- More opportunities for people to achieve success
- Improved physical, mental and emotional health and well-being
- Maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Angus Council Education Department Anti-Bullying Policy of 2009, (report number 439/09), provided schools with clear guidance and advice on dealing with bullying incidents. The new policy builds on effective practice and reflects the work of the 'Think Before You Type' campaign led by young people in Angus.

3.2 Addressing bullying is key to achieving the Scottish Government's ambition to make Scotland the best place to grow up for all our children and young people, and is integral to many aspects of the refreshed National Performance Framework. When left unaddressed, bullying has the ability to undermine the national outcomes set out for children and young people's education, health and human rights.

3.3 The safety of our children, young people and staff is of paramount importance. There are a number of policies and procedures in place to support our schools to promote safety and minimise risk.

3.4 This policy acknowledges developments in technological communication and social media and the national legislative and policy landscape, including the Equality Act, 2010; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); Getting it Right

for Every Child; Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 (Scottish Government, June 2017) and Supporting Transgender Young People (2017).

- 3.5 This policy was developed in partnership with parents/carers, children, young people and other agencies through online questionnaire and a multi-agency steering group.
- 3.6 This policy also takes into consideration the 12 recommendations from the 'Think Before You Type' anti-bullying campaign. This is a campaign developed in partnership between Angus Council, Respectme and NSPCC Scotland and led by 16 young people from across Angus, that engaged young people, parents/carers, practitioners, as well as local government in renewed efforts to address online bullying – helping to contribute to positive relationships, behaviour change and cultures of respect in their communities.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 This policy is for Angus Council's Schools and Early Learning and Child Care settings and has been developed in line with 'Respect for All', the national approach to anti-bullying for Scotland's children and young people which provides an overarching framework and context for all anti-bullying work in Scotland.
- 4.2 In line with national expectations, our practice in recording incidents of bullying has been revised. The Bullying and Equalities module in SEEMiS is now used in schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and will enable the local authority to collate and analyse more detailed information centrally. For example, the data gathered can help identify trends and patterns, specific issues around equality and diversity and help schools and the local authority to guide improvements in practice.
- 4.3 Currently, our schools use a range of strategies to proactively encourage children and young people to report incidents and suspected incidents of bullying. These include whole school assemblies, making procedures accessible on the school website, themed anti-bullying weeks, displays and newsletters, confidential comments boxes and peer mediation. Some schools make use of counselling services and published resources such as Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) and Rights Respecting Schools.
- 4.4 Parental workshops, and training on anti-bullying, facilitated by RespectMe, has already been provided for all School and Pupil Support Assistants (SPSAs) in Angus.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 All schools will receive and discuss this revised Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 5.2 All schools will revise their own anti-bullying policy within one year of the launch of this policy.
- 5.3 A programme of training will continue to be developed for staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- 5.4 The effectiveness of restorative approaches in resolving bullying behaviour will be reviewed and evaluated.
- 5.5 This policy will be reviewed in 2023.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs associated with training for staff.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is appended to this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices: Anti-Bullying Policy (January 2020)

 Equality Impact Assessment