

Anti-Bullying in Worcestershire Schools

Response of the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Young People

Bullying is a complex action, the act of bullying damages both the bully and the bullied. It takes many forms and is carried out to a range of different degrees of intensity. It occurs across the age spectrum impacting the very young to the very old. Ancient, ingrained, protective, reactive responses may fuel the hurt, intimidation or persecution but increasingly the level of intensity, extremes of behaviour and range of bullying mechanisms have taken society to a new low.

Despite the fact it is unlikely to be totally eradicated, society must uncompromisingly strive to abolish bullying in all its forms with particular emphasis on the most damaging manifestations of the behavioural trait.

It goes without saying that any work to highlight bullying within organisations, in the wider community context must be welcomed wholeheartedly. Addressing bullying is a priority in the Children and Young People's Plan.

The Scrutiny concentrates on bullying in the Authority's Schools by and impacting pupils 11 – 18 Key Stages 3 and 4 and in 6th forms.

In the responses, I am highlighting the work that is going on already in the areas that were highlighted in the Scrutiny Report. In summary, much of what was identified in the Scrutiny Report is already work in progress, with further development work to be done.

Several of the recommendations are particularly helpful as they have highlighted issues not been covered in our work in progress and more will be done accordingly, and progress monitored as usual.

Where issues have been identified that need further action in respect of schools, this will be done through the cluster working and the anti-bullying coordinator, who can make recommendations to schools.

The recommendations are clear. The response is to each recommendation in turn, relating to the context of the Scrutiny.

Recommendation		Response
1/5/6	To access the scale of the problem schools should record all incidents and report them to the LA.	<p>The County's policy 2006, produced following consultation, is the guideline to frame individual settings' own anti bullying policies to address their particular requirements.</p> <p>This is already in progress. The Council is currently developing with an outside provider (Tagish) a case management system that schools and other settings (ChS, Youth Centres, SureStart, Residential etc.) can use to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Record all incidents,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Record actions taken, ▪ Send emails to professionals to request support, ▪ A web site element for parents, children and young people to report incidents if they are not confident about working with an individual setting,
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable consistent valuable data to be reported to the LA, ▪ There will be a good practice forum through Edulink <p>I believe full reporting is an important first step.</p> <p>This system will be sufficiently adapted to Worcestershire to be piloted by mid Spring Term. This system will be unique to Worcestershire due to its sophisticated link with Edulink.</p> <p>Whilst it is important to understand the scale it is equally important to understand the intensity. I would wish, in addition, energy to be directed to:</p>
		<p>a) The forms of bullying that were most damaging first:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Cyber bullying Mobile phone bullying Extreme physical and emotional abuse</p>
		<p>b) Specific groups:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Travellers Migrants</p>
		<p>c) and 'hot spots' of lower level bullying. In particular:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">School transition trends</p>
2/3	A universal database should be used for recording and reporting incidents of bullying.	Yes, this is being done – this is addressed in the above point.
4	Restriction of access to inappropriate sites.	Yes, where young people use web sites through schools, homes, youth setting, libraries, etc., it is advisable the usage is monitored.

		<p>Yes, we are doing this. In Worcestershire ChS settings and schools monitoring is by “Forensic software” (there are a number of propriety products on the market). Our ICT teacher advisor, part of the Education Improvement Team, in particular is recommending a number of products. This is new work, the ripple effect of the message has still to be embedded. Some settings are using such software very effectively.</p>	
		<p>Worcestershire’s Safeguarding Board has set up a specific group to look at and promote e safety. My quarterly meeting with the Director of Children’s Services and the Chair of the Safeguarding Board cover progress in this area. It will never be possible to force all parents and all settings to adhere to e-safety guidelines but our approach will be very robust.</p> <p>There is a Worcestershire e safety pledge which highlights all the elements related to being safe on-line, we link to the work of CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre) with dedicated training for professions in January. West Mercia Constabulary, part of the e safety group have a presentation which they are delivering across the County – Parents evenings etc. I have also asked the Safeguarding Board to evaluate the use of Miss Dorothy.com as an effective tool to reach parents.</p>	
5/17/22 /23	Local Authority supports schools in connection with:	<p>We are doing this but can do more. The LA has an anti bullying co-ordinator, Hannah Cridford, Extension 8895. This is a permanent post. We certainly do support schools, parents and settings:</p>	
	a) Cyber bullying	▪	e-safety to address cyber bullying
	b) Providing information advice and guidance through the Antibullying Co-ordinator role	▪	Provide information advice and guidance plus training. We are very proactive in this role.
	c) Encourage schools to undertake mediation themselves	▪	Work with schools and parent settings in encouraging professionals, carers and parents to work together wherever possible.
	d) Monitor the good practice sharing via Edulink	▪	Facilitate good practice sharing through Edulink

	e)	Set quality standards for schools – devised by young people	▪	Have multi-agency training
	f)	Put in place a young persons ‘charter mark’ award scheme.	There are areas to be developed:	
	g)	Provides training programmes for governors within Governor Training Programme	e)	<i>Set quality standards for schools – devised by young people</i>
	h)	Urges governing bodies to implement new powers relating to pupils behaviour beyond the school gate.	f)	<i>Put in place a young persons ‘charter mark’ award scheme.</i>
			h)	<i>Urges governing bodies to implement new powers relating to pupils behaviour beyond the school gate.</i>
				- they are done to a certain extent through continuing professional development. A governor briefing, summarising policy, legal duties and developments, is distributed via the continuing professional development brochure. The co-ordinator has agreed to liaise more with Governor Training.
16/18/19/21	Schools:			
	a)	Take whole school approach Share good practice via Edulink	Our role with schools is one of challenge and influence.	
	b)	Develop links with neighbouring policing teams and other local partners	The whole of this section is part of the information, advice, guidance, support with practice and policy of the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.	
	c)	Record their anti bullying policy in the name of the person responsible for co-ordinating the anti bullying work within school	We have one co-ordinator and 250 schools. The co-ordinator remit is wider than schools. Members can see from my response a	

	d)	Use a teacher education day every two years to ensure that all staff are given training on the school's anti bullying policy and measures to deal with incidents and how to report them.	great deal is being done to maximise the use of the Safeguarding Board, partners e.g. Police and IT to ensure the messages are embedded. Extended school co-ordinators can help a great deal through cluster working.
	e)	Appoint a named governor for monitoring + evaluation of anti bullying measures including the annual review of the anti bullying policy	
12/13/15		Schools review their antibullying policy annually sending a copy to the antibullying co-ordinator and publicise to the wider community	As stated above, our role with schools is one of challenge and influence.
11/14		When drawing up their antibullying policy schools:	As stated above, our role with schools is one of challenge and influence.
	a)	Consult with the wider community	
	b)	Produce a pupil friendly format	
	c)	Issue it at the start of a new school year	
8/15		Cluster working by staff and governors, focuses on clarity around agreed standards and ethos, mediation in training in relation to antibullying work.	As stated above, our role with schools is one of challenge and influence.

Chair of the Safeguarding Board, the Director of Children Services, myself and the anti-bullying co-ordinator will together work on a letter to go to all schools at the start of the Spring Term highlighting the very good points made by the Scrutiny Panel in relation to improved approaches to anti bullying around the school setting.

The letter will include references to how the Local Authority can and does support schools.

Director of Children Services, Chair of the Safeguarding Board, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator and myself thank the Scrutiny Panel for this thorough snapshot around this very important subject – Anti-Bullying.

I hope the Scrutiny Panel appreciate the excellent work going on around the County, just as we appreciate the Scrutiny raising awareness from this scrutiny and the excellent pointers for improvement.

I commit to reporting back on those development points suggested by the Panel, picked up in my response.

Panel Members may like to know the DCSF Anti-bullying Guidance issued September 2007, The Authority's Anti-bullying Policy 2006 and Anti-bullying Strategy Report October 2008 are available on file in the members lounge.