

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508502, North Lanarkshire Council
Sector: local government
Subject: primary school
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's daughter complained to her primary school of being bullied. The school took some action but the bullying continued. This was repeatedly reported to the school but the situation was not resolved. Mrs C decided to remove her daughter from the school due to the situation and recalled the head teacher saying that she was 'more than happy' for Miss C to move school. Mrs C complained to the council that the school had not taken reasonable action in response to the reports of her daughter being bullied and about the head teacher saying she was 'more than happy' for Miss C to move school. The council's investigation concluded that the school had acted reasonably. Mrs C raised complaints about this with us.

We found that the school had not made any reasonable record of the reports of bullying, the actions taken or the subsequent outcomes. The school's policy and the council's related strategy indicated that this should have been done, and monitoring take place. We decided, therefore, that the school had not taken reasonable action in relation to the complaints of bullying and we made recommendations to address this.

The council told us that the head teacher's remarks had been made in the context of Miss C obtaining a new start from moving schools. We decided that there was no evidence to reasonably conclude that the head teacher had made the remarks Mrs C alleged. We also decided that the council had not responded reasonably to the specific matters raised in Mrs C's complaints and had included irrelevant information in their responses and we made a recommendation to address this.

Recommendations

We recommended that the council:

- apologise to Mrs C and Miss C that the school did not take reasonable action in response to complaints that Miss C was being bullied;
- finalise development of the reporting procedures mentioned in their strategy and implement these;
- assure us that the anti-bullying policies of all schools have been reviewed to ensure that they are in line with their strategy regarding the recording of reports of bullying, action taken and subsequent outcomes;
- assure us that a monitoring system has been put in place to ensure that schools are recording reports of bullying, action taken and subsequent outcomes in line with their strategy;
- apologise to Mrs C that they did not respond to her complaint reasonably; and
- remind relevant staff of the importance of responding directly to specific points raised in complaints and that only information relevant to the complaint being considered should be included in complaint responses.