

SPSO decision report

Case: 201601915, Glasgow City Council
Sector: local government
Subject: primary school
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr and Mrs C complained on behalf of two of their children (Master A and Miss A), who have additional support needs. They complained that the council failed to provide the children with adequate educational support, that they had failed to follow their anti-bullying policy in relation to Master A, and that their investigation of the complaint was unreasonable. They also complained that the head teacher of the children's school had made an inappropriate referral to the social work department.

In response to our enquiry the council provided us with the children's pastoral care notes, the children's wellbeing assessments and plans, and the relevant council policies. We found that the council mostly appeared to have followed their policies when providing the children with educational support but we noted that neither Mr and Mrs C, nor the children, had been consulted in relation to the children's wellbeing assessments and plans, which is in line with council policies. However, we did not consider that this was in itself enough to uphold the complaints.

In relation to the complaint about bullying, it was clear that there was a difference in opinion between the council and Mr and Mrs C. Mr and Mrs C considered that Master A had experienced a number of incidences of bullying, but the council disagreed and had therefore not recorded the events as bullying. In relation to one incident involving another child that had been recorded, we considered that the council had dealt with the matter appropriately and in line with their anti-bullying policy.

We were critical of the way in which the council had investigated this complaint. Mrs C had to chase a response and the council's initial response to her was very brief. We considered that the investigation could have been carried out more clearly and transparently.

In relation to the social work referral we found that contact had been made in an informal way with a view to supporting the family, and we therefore did not uphold this complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise for failing to consult with Mr and Mrs C, or Master A, in relation to Master A's wellbeing assessment and plan.
- Apologise for failing to consult with Mr and Mrs C, or Miss A, in relation to Miss A's wellbeing assessment and plan.
- Apologise for the failings in the complaint investigation. All apologies should comply with SPSO guidance on making an apology, available at www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Staff should be confident in identifying and escalating complaints, and should provide details of their

investigations when responding to complaints.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.