

## SPSO decision report



**Case:** 202310572, Fife Council  
**Sector:** Local Government  
**Subject:** Primary School  
**Decision:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

C complained that the council unreasonably failed to follow relevant processes and procedures in managing and responding to bullying behaviour experienced by C's child (A). C also complained about the way the council handled their complaint.

In response to C's complaint, the council confirmed that the school had taken appropriate action in responding to incidents and had investigated C's complaint reasonably. C was dissatisfied with the council's responses and brought their complaint to this office.

We found that the school had not consistently recorded incidents reported in pastoral and other recording systems. Therefore, it was not possible to determine with any certainty what actions the school took in response to concerns and the impact those actions were having both on A and any perpetrators of bullying behaviour. We also found that the council failed to reasonably investigate aspects of C's complaint. Therefore, we upheld C's complaints.

### Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case

Apologise to C and A for the failures identified. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at [www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets](http://www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets).

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Ensure staff at the relevant school are following the council Anti-bullying Policy and are familiar with the requirements of SEEMIS recording, reporting and monitoring. Staff should understand the importance of keeping accurate records and chronologies of a pupil's time in school.
- The council should audit the SEEMIS recording and pastoral record keeping in the relevant school to ensure that the school and its staff are meeting the requirements of relevant policies.

In relation to complaints handling, we recommended:

- Individuals investigating complaints should be aware of the complaints handling process together with the importance of assessing the quality of the evidence available, the impact this has on the ability to respond to a complaint and the learning and improvements which should be identified. We offer SPSO accredited Complaints Handling training. Details and registration forms for our online self-guided Good Complaints Handling course (Stage 1) and our online trainer-led Complaints Investigation Skills course (Stage 2) are available at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/training-courses>.