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Jo Brown, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator
Peter Wild, Strategic Lead - Inclusion

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Children, Young People and Families Directorate
County Hall
New Road, Oxford
OX1 1ND

02 March 2010

Dear Ms. Brown and Mr. Wild,

We are writing to follow up on the question and answer session in which you participated at the last meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee. At the meeting you explained that you and the Service Manager (Monitoring and Tracking) would be reviewing the anti-bullying strategy with multi-agency partners in the near future. During the meeting, members of the Committee made the following suggestions which we would like to see fed into the review:

The Committee recognises that there are a number of multi-agency partners working hard in this area. They recommend that the following points be incorporated into the service strategy in order to promote effective joint working.

- The Committee recommends that the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator should be involved in the establishment and development of Safer Schools Partnerships, and that the Co-ordinator considers becoming involved in Safer Schools Partnerships Steering Group.
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator further develop their links with Thames Valley Police, especially with regard to joint training.
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator consider signposting schools to the support which other agencies can provide to tackle the underlying problems of children who bully.

Much of the Committee's discussion centred on the crucial role which schools must play in tackling bullying. As such, the Committee would like to see the following points related to the Co-ordinator's work with schools reflected in the strategy.

- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator should have due regard to the existing pressures on school staff time whilst developing its programme of work.
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator should where possible pursue links with school councils.
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator should encourage governing bodies to actively monitor both the bullying situation and the implementation of an anti-bullying strategy in their schools.
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator examine alternative means of communicating with schools and teaching staff, so as to reduce reliance on its website.



Representatives of Thames Valley Police present at the meeting contributed two pertinent points related to the collection and reporting of data. The Committee would like to see these points addressed.

- The Committee suggests that the Co-ordinator should consider setting minimum standards for data sharing.
- The Committee suggests that the service should consider the issue of serial bullying and whether this can be tracked.

Furthermore, there are a number of specific issues which the Committee would like the Co-ordinator to give consideration.

- The Co-ordinator should consider developing clear guidance on bullying, focussing particularly on resilience to bullying, for circulation to parents. The service should consider ways they can encourage pupils to have empathy for others.
- The Co-ordinator should think about what sanctions schools can take against bullies, and advise schools on potential effectiveness.
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator should recognise that the bullying of teachers remains an issue.

Finally, the Committee was of the opinion that working to tackle cyber-bullying should remain a priority.

We would appreciate the inclusion of these items into the forthcoming review of the anti-bullying strategy. We would also like you to appear before the Committee again in six months time to report back on the outcomes of the strategy review.

Yours sincerely,

Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Cc:

Meera Spillet

Jan Paine

Rennie Thompson

Chief Inspector Lindsey Finch, TVP

Dave Parry, TVP

Cllr Michael Waine

Cllr Louise Chapman

Deborah Miller