

P-05-862 Tackling School Bullying, Correspondence – Action for Children to Chair, 29.07.19

Thank you for the letter dated 26th June 2019 with regards to the petition below (P-05-862 Tackling school bullying)

“We believe that bullying in schools is often ignored and the issue is not confronted in too many cases. Schools are required to have an anti-bullying policy but too often this is merely a paperwork statement which is not acted upon.

We want the Welsh Assembly to produce a standard bullying framework which is enforceable by law. The after affects of school bullying often affects victims throughout their lives therefore changes are required as the current system is a failure. Schools often fail to record bullying incidents as such for fear of damaging their reputation and victims who speak out often find themselves punished themselves, harming their self-esteem even more.

We insist that bullying is recorded and acted upon as such with better recording, cctv, reporting, compulsory parental interaction.”

In responding to the above petition, we have liaised with frontline staff and young people who are delivering and participating in Action for Children’s Blues Programme throughout Wales.

Although schools in Wales have bullying policy’s in place often it can be perceived by parents and young people as a tokenistic approach designed to appease parents rather than properly support young people.

We discussed with young people on what they thought could realistically work within a school setting. The young people felt that an action plan the school and young people could agree to would be ideal.

They also felt a partnership approach between young people and the school would reap huge benefits in which informing parents could be part of an agreement rather than compulsory, unless there are safeguarding or more serious concerns.

Young people were concerned that if the contacting of parents was compulsory it could in a lot of situations make it far worse for the young people involved, although we feel that young people could be encouraged to talk to their parents at home.

Young people they felt contacting parents as a first response, was one of the main reasons why young people fail to disclose an issue with pastoral support teams. Also, when listening and taking in the views of young people they felt that schools do need to record their actions and to be accountable for what they have or have not done in response to a bullying allegation.

Young people said that schools should follow up bullying allegations by monitoring over a longer period rather than dealing with it once and thinking the matter is dealt with.

The final point is that we feel it would be hugely beneficial if pupils were consulted about what action that might be taken and have a say in what approach would work best to resolve the situation, an example of this could be a restorative approach.

Many thanks for contacting Action for Children for a response to the petition, if you require any further information please do not hesitate to ask.

Yours sincerely