

	<p style="text-align: center;">Children & Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee 5th June 2007</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Director of Children & Families</p>
<p>For Action Wards Affected: ALL</p>	
<p>Bullying</p>	

1.0 Summary

Tackling bullying is a high priority for the School Improvement Services and is one of the objectives in Strategic Priority six of the Children and Young People's Plan.

2.0 Recommendation

The Committee is asked to review the work to date and consider any areas for further investigation

3.0 Detail

Effective practice to tackle bullying has existed in many Brent schools for many years. Schools use a wide variety of strategies to tackle bullying. These include peer mentoring/buddying schemes, student anti-bullying councils and preventative work through the curriculum.

- 3.1 Approximately 60% of Brent primary schools engage with the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials which help to develop emotional, health and well-being as part of a whole-school approach. It includes one component specifically on bullying. Secondary schools also tackle bullying through the curriculum and there

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are secondary SEAL materials which have just been produced by the Secondary Strategy. We are holding a launch for secondary schools to familiarise them with the SEAL materials on 12 June 2007.

- 3.2 Particularly in the last two years, the School Improvement Services has given a strong lead to schools in addressing the issue. In June 2005, we held an anti-bullying conference called 'Let's Tackle it Together'. This included a focus on homophobic bullying and all participants were provided with a copy of the joint DfES/DoH publication 'Stand Up For Us'.
- 3.3 In November 2005, our Secondary Inclusion Managers Meeting, made up of senior leaders from secondary schools, focused on bullying and specifically raised the issue of homophobic bullying. In addition, we ran a borough poetry and poster competition for all schools which resulted in the publication of the best entries from each school as part of National Anti-Bullying Week in November. This helped schools to raise the profile of their anti-bullying work.
- 3.4 During 2006, in consultation with schools, school improvement advisers and other services within the local authority, anti-bullying guidance for schools was placed on the extranet. Section 6, 'What is Bullying?' refers to the fact that verbal bullying *can focus on religion, nationality, race, culture or sexuality*. Section 7, 'What does bullying focus on?' has a sub-section 'Sex/Gender' which states: *Staff should not ignore comments based on sexuality and should follow school procedures to tackle it. Girls can be subject to sexist taunts and bullying based on gender. Brent schools should tackle all forms of homophobic bullying through preventative education and by having in place systems to tackle this type of bullying. Academic research indicates that gay pupils are more likely than others to leave school at sixteen because of persistent bullying.*
- 3.5 One secondary school expressed an interest in developing its anti-bullying work to specifically address homophobic bullying. As a result two members of the Behaviour and Attendance team met with the education officer from Stonewall in September 2006. Stonewall has offered to support the local authority in any work to combat homophobic bullying. The development of work to tackle homophobic bullying forms part of the action plan of the Behaviour and Attendance Team.
- 3.6 In September 2006 the School Improvement Services held a launch of National Anti-Bullying Week. Twenty nine schools attended, with 90 participants, including a large number of pupils. The outcome from the launch was that staff and pupils went back to their schools and planned how they wished to mark National Anti-Bullying Week in November. Schools were then supported during the week to highlight the theme of the week, 'The Role of the Bystander'.
- 3.7 An Anti-Racist Bullying Conference was held in November 2006 to promote materials from the Department for Education and Skills. This was organised jointly by the Ethnic Minority and Travellers' Achievement Service and the Behaviour and Attendance Team and focused on 'bullying around racism, religion and culture' specific reference to homophobic bullying was made within this context.
- 3.8 As a direct outcome from the launch of National Anti-Bullying Week a Secondary Student Anti-Bullying Council was set up in February 2007. The aims of the

council are to promote: good practice within individual schools; joint anti-bullying work across Brent secondary schools; awareness in secondary schools of the need to tackle bullying. The council decided that it wanted to produce a DVD of good practice in Brent schools. It will also take a lead in promoting National Anti-Bullying Week in November 2007.

- 3.9 A questionnaire to primary schools has recently been sent out. Schools were asked if they have recently reviewed their anti-bullying policy and whether or not this review includes implementing an anti-bullying charter. DfES guidance on the format for such a charter is included as Appendix 4 in our guidance document. A similar questionnaire will be sent out to secondary schools later in the summer term.

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