

P-05-862 Tackling school bullying – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Chair, 06.02.19

Dear Sir/Madam

I refer to our recent petition which is due to be discussed.

I am recently aware of proposed updates to the WA guidelines in respect of bullying in schools. Whilst there is some great potential in dealing with bullying within the updated guidelines I would like to share my reservations.

1/ Schools are obliged to create an anti bullying/safeguarding policy, based upon the government guidelines. There is flexibility to tailor the policy.

2/ Bullying/Safeguarding policies are to be updated periodically.

3/ 1&2 are very good BUT the policies must be acted upon. What rules or legislation is going to be put in place to ensure the actions of staff are carried out in relation to the policy.

4/ Supposing the point raised in 3 is put into legislation HOW is it going to be overviewed? School inspections need to investigate it is being carried out.

5/ to date bullying is a dirty word within schools and far too often is swept under the carpet. The mental health and wellbeing of victims are a casualty of this. Bullying progresses throughout adulthood if not checked early enough. Early intervention stops progression.

6/ Too often victims feel penalised by schools actions(or often inaction) towards dealing with bullying.

Given all of the above we would like a tighter national framework with a standard policy. This would simplify inspections and when teachers change jobs the policy is the same. Temporary staff would be aware of correct procedures also.

We need to adopt a system of early intervention and a stepped systematic approach to dealing with it. I suggest upon possibly the second incident parents are informed, the third incident the perpetrator undergoes awareness education, possibly a short course to be carried out during a detention. Any further incident is compulsory referred to a police liaison officer.

I am merely suggesting all of the above. I lost my son in the most tragic of circumstances due to bullying and I want you to be bold and make a difference and

adopt a policy that works. Lets intervene, let's keep pupils safe and turn lives around.
In order to do this we have to accept that the current system is flawed and
inadequate.

Yours faithfully

Byron John