

Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Friday, 9th March, 2007.

Present: Cllr Mrs M Rigg (Chairman), Cllr M Cherrett, Cllr C Coombs, Cllr M Frankland, Cllr K Lupton, Cllr R Rix; Mr A Maxwell (Diocesan Representative)

Officers: I Edmunds, A Hantler, J. Tierney (CESC); G Birtle, P Mennear, F Shayler (LD).

Also in attendance: Mr G Davies, Mr D Campbell, Mr R G Lupton (Non voting co-opted representatives); V McFarlane (Regional Co-ordinator Anti Bullying Alliance); N Scriven (Vantage Technologies); B Martin (Ingleby Mill Primary School), S Bason (The Village Primary School), L Lucas (Northfield School), J Harrison (Fairfield School), J Heap (Mill Lane School), G Steel (Norton Primary School), J Wood (Yarm Primary School), M Ibbotson (Thornaby Community School). Representatives of Stockton Youth Assembly and Community Campus Youth Forum.

Apologies: were submitted by Cllrs Mrs Beaumont, Harrington, Jones, Miss Inman, Mrs Trainer; Mr Beach, Mr Cash (Parent Governor Representatives); Mr B Percival (Non Voting Co-opted Representatives).

1089 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Lupton declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item no. 3 - Review of Bullying due to his wife working with some of the Schools mentioned and in attendance at the meeting.

1090 Review of Bullying

Members were invited to receive evidence in relation to the Review of Bullying to enable them to derive conclusions and recommendations from the information received. Members had chosen to review in particular the recording mechanisms for incidents of bullying in Stockton's Schools.

Anna Michelle Hantler (Anti Bullying Officer) provided a presentation detailing the meaning of 'Bullying', including the acronym STOP (Several Times on Purpose) used to help describe bullying. The activities that were being held within Schools to prevent bullying were detailed. It was felt that it was important to raise assertiveness and confidence in order for children to speak out when they were being bullied rather than remain silent. Training was being provided throughout Stockton's Schools to enable Teachers/Teaching Assistants, Residential Staff at Children's Care Homes etc. to learn strategies to control bullying. Meetings and Seminars were held to share good practice between other authorities and professionals.

The 'Massage in School Programme Association' was being piloted in a number of primary schools within the borough and so far Teaching staff had noticed significant improvements amongst children. The vision for the programme was "that every child attending schools experience positive and nurturing touch each day".

Information was provided on 'Cyber Bullying' a form of bullying done through mobile phone messages, msn messenger etc.

Two Schools within the borough had been working towards accreditation for their bullying policies and procedures, a system that had been successfully

utilised in Durham. It was hoped that all schools within the borough would eventually have the kitemark accreditation.

A demonstration on the Sentinel recording system that may be introduced to record incidents of bullying was provided by Nikki Scriven of Vantage Technologies. A North East Regional Pilot was taking place in Schools in Gateshead, Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland, Sunderland and Darlington.

Members asked a number of questions on the Sentinel System and raised some concerns in regard to how the information was recorded, who recorded it, and how long the information was stored. It was felt that measures would need to be put in place to ensure that the system was not open to abuse. Members were informed that Vantage Technologies were able to tailor make the system to fit with the Authority's objectives.

Evidence was provided by Val McFarlane with regard to the Durham Accreditation Scheme. Schools who were operating best practice methods to deal with bullying would put evidence together which would then be assessed by a panel of various appropriate bodies including members of the community, staff, children etc. It was hoped that the scheme would be nationalised.

Evidence was then received from representatives of the various primary schools and the secondary school that was in attendance. All of the representatives were positive about the work that was taking place in Schools. The pilot scheme of Massage in Primary Schools had received good feedback, teachers felt that the children particularly enjoyed circle time where they were able to share their feelings. The Schools that had used the Urban Dance Group to increase children's self confidence had been successful and it was thought that a positive message had been put across. Some Schools had included a nurturing class for children with special needs. It was felt that Schools had been offered good training and some teachers were confident to pass on their skills to other teachers and teaching assistants with their own schools.

Members of the Youth Assembly were in attendance and gave their views on bullying inside and out of school.

Members discussed all of the evidence received and it was requested that the Chairman discuss with the Cabinet Member whether/how the decision had been taken to fund the Sentinel system for recording incidents of bullying. Members wished to see unity among Schools for their policies and recording systems and discussed appropriate recommendations to be included within their final report.

Concluded that:-

1. The evidence received be noted.
2. The Chairman hold discussions with the Cabinet Member on the Sentinel System.
3. The Scrutiny Officer draft the final report and circulate to Members prior to their meeting on Tuesday 20th March 2007

