Meeting 11 of the Steering Committee to Review the Action Plan on Bullying 2013 Minutes

Thursday 27th October 2022, 10.30 am – 1pm

Conference Room G13/14 Department of Education, Marlborough Street

Attendees:

Aileen Walsh, Parents and Learners Unit, Department of Education
Caitlin Faye Maniti, President, Irish Second-Level Students' Union
Catherine Cross, National Parents Council Primary
Prof James O'Higgins Norman, Director, UNESCO Chair on Tackling Bullying and Cyberbullying
Judith Lyons, Parents and Learners Unit, Department of Education
Majella O'Dea, Teacher Education Section, Department of Education.
Maria Bracken, Digital, Teacher Supply, Teaching Council Section, Department of Education
Maria Joyce, Co-ordinator National Traveller Women's Forum
Martin Lally.
Moninne Griffith, CEO, Belong To
Niamh Molloy, Parents and Learners Unit, Department of Education
Dr Noel Purdy, Director, Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement (CREU) Stranmillis University College
Paul Rolston, National Parents Council Post-Primary
Rebecca Galligan, Post-Primary Senior Inspector, Inspectorate, Department of Education
Ryan McKay, Parents and Learners Unit, Department of Education
Sarah Benson, CEO, Women's Aid
Sharon Eustace, Regional Director, National Educational Psychological Service, Department of Education
Yvonne Keating, Chief Inspector, Inspectorate, Department of Education.

Apologies:

Aileen Hickie, CEO, Parentline
Bridget Wilson, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary, Schools Division, Department of Education
Emer O'Neill, Anti-Racism Activist, Teacher, Presenter
Jane McGarrigle, Project Officer, Webwise
Ronan Kielt, Teacher Education Section, Department of Education
Seònaid Ó'Murchadha, Board member, Independent Living Movement Ireland
Zak Moradi, Anti-racism Activist

Purpose of the Meeting:

The eleventh meeting of the Steering Committee to review the Action plan on Bullying 2013.

1. **Welcome, overview of agenda, minutes of previous meetings**

Dr Purdy welcomed the attendees, expressed huge thanks to members for their work to date, read the apologies and the agenda. The format for meeting was explained which included a review of the draft action plan, round table discussion and plenary feedback.

Dr Purdy advised that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the draft actions which had been circulated to the Steering Committee members. Dr Purdy advised that hard copies were available and that the format of the meeting was to have a round table discussion and provide feedback on the actions for each key area for wellbeing promotion. Dr Purdy advised that steering committee members could also send more detailed written feedback to the Parents and Learners Unit.

Dr Purdy clarified that although a draft of the full Action Plan document had been circulated to the Steering Committee, today's meeting would focus on the proposed actions only, in order to provide adequate time for detailed consideration. Dr Purdy confirmed that the launch date for the Action Plan is December 1st 2022.

The Steering Committee members welcomed the structure and layout of the draft Action Plan. Members considered the actions to be broad and pro-active. Members commented that implementation of the actions would make a difference in preventing and addressing bullying.

2. **Feedback on Actions relating to Culture and Environment**

- Stronger language needed for Action plan, "should" to be replaced with "will"
- More focus needed on living the school culture and values statement
- "Equality" needs to be referenced and not just inclusion and diversity
- School culture should be a dynamic process and should not be seen as an add-on
- The Inspectorate's role has to be incorporated into the school evaluation piece
- The collaboration between NEPS and the Inspectorate on a plan to support the evaluation of wellbeing was viewed as very important
- It is crucial to name sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, transphobia
- Sexism is different to sexual harassment

3. **Feedback on Actions relating to Relationships and Partnerships**

- A link to Tacklebullying.ie should be on all school websites
- The role and importance of Webwise to address internet safety concerns
- *Being LGBT* in Schools Resource needs updating
- School support teams – encouraging staff to avail of CPD is not strong enough
- Clear guidance for schools on the role of Parents Association
- Guidelines required from the Department of Education for student mentors and student support teams
- Policies should include the involvement of parents and students association
- More specific anti-bullying training required for all school staff
- Role and importance of bystanders was highlighted
- Diversity in student councils
- Every school must have a dedicated anti-bullying team who drives and monitors a whole school programme

4. Tea Break

5. Feedback on Actions relating to Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- We should build teacher supports and skills to tackle bullying
- Welcome the focus on all school staff receiving training
- Importance of anti-bullying programmes such as FUSE
- Diversity in staff recruitment and retention
- Invest in e-learning and Webinars
- Literature and text book representation -not always positive
- A culture and values statement should link to the wider policy
- Share learning across different schools
- Events like Traveller Pride week to be incorporated into the curriculum
- Clarity required as to when bullying becomes a child protection issue

6. Feedback on Actions relating to Policy and Planning

- Requirement for schools to develop anti-bullying policy in collaboration with parents, students and staff
- Data collection –how is it collated and should it be anonymous and recorded by an outside party
- Meaningful involvement of children and young people
- Schools should engage with representative groups in their community
- Module in Initial Teacher Education on how to communicate, build relationships and collaborate with all
- Whole school community understands their roles and responsibilities
- Code of Behaviour guidelines needs updating
- Importance of an Online Safety Commissioner
- Need evaluation of the implementation of the action plan
- Should there be an update to the action plan in 5 years' time?

7. Summary and close

Dr Purdy thanked the steering committee members for their valuable feedback and reminded members to submit written feedback to the Parents and Learners Unit.