

SPSO decision report

Case: 201810430, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Sector: Local Government
Subject: Primary School
Decision: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C's child (A) was involved in an incident with another pupil. C complained to the council about how the matter had been handled. They complained about the school's actions once the incident was reported, the school's failure to instigate child protection procedures or involve partner services, and about the lack of ongoing assistance and support to A following the incident.

The council concluded that the school's actions on the day of the incident had been reasonable and that support measures were put in place within the school following the incident, but also that the school should have made more efforts to contact the Educational Psychology Service at an early stage. The council accepted that it would have been appropriate to contact the Safeguarding Manager after A had given further information about the incident. The council said that the school had taken steps to ensure these shortcomings would not be repeated in future, but also noted that it was not likely that different actions would have been taken in the event of earlier contact with the Educational Psychology Service and the Safeguarding Manager. C was dissatisfied with this response and brought their complaint to us.

We found that the council's investigations of the incident were reasonable in light of the specific circumstances and the relevant policy, procedure and guidance. In reaching our conclusion we took into account that the council had accepted that the school should have sought advice from the Safeguarding Manager. In relation to communication, we found that the school shared accurate details of the incident, as were available to them at the time, when they initially contacted C. We also found that it was reasonable they did not invite C to meet with them at this point given the circumstances, and that the school were open with C about the measures they had taken, while sharing a reasonable amount of detail about these measures with C in the circumstances, and having regard to confidentiality considerations. We did not uphold these aspects of C's complaint.

In relation to the support provided to A, we found that the school took some reasonable steps to support A following the incident. However, we considered that they did not pursue their attempted contact of the Educational Psychology Service as persistently as would have been reasonable given the circumstances. As the council had recognised this as part of their investigation of C's complaints and apologised for this, we upheld this aspect of C's complaint but did not make any further recommendations.