HarrowCOUNCIL
LONDON

Meeting: Education Consultative Forum **Date:** 31st January 2006 **Subject:** **Responsible Officer:** Javed Khan **Contact Officer:** Carole Tobin-Achievement and Inclusion Anna Tenconi-Education Welfare Service **Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Stephenson **Key Decision:** **Status: Information**

<u>**Section 1: Summary**</u>

Decision Required

To note and comment on the report submitted

Reason for report

At the meeting on 22nd September 2005 members of ECF expressed an interest in knowing more about the Local Authority's work on bullying and its links to truancy

Benefits

The report outlines the work undertaken across services to mitigate against bullying in schools

Cost of Proposals

Not applicable

Risks

Not applicable

Implications if recommendations rejected

Not applicable

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

Bullying can be defined as a physical, psychological or verbal attack against an individual or group of individuals by a person or group of persons, causing physical or psychological harm to the victim. It is usually conscious and wilful and commonly consists of repeated acts of aggression and / or manipulation. It can take a number of forms – both physical and non - physical, either in combination or in isolation. Any bullying, whether physical or non – physical, may result in lasting psychological damage to the individual.

Bullying generally falls into one or a combination of the following categories:

- **Physical Bullying - Unprovoked assault on a person or group which can range from a 'prod' to grievous bodily harm.**

- **Psychological - Reduction of a person's self-esteem or confidence through threatening behaviour, taunting or teasing about race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, family circumstances, appearance, or any other feature of their lives which can be used to wound them.**

- **Social – Ostracism / rejection by peer group.**

- **Verbal - The use of language in a derogatory or offensive manner, such as swearing, racist or sexist abuse, sexual innuendo, spreading rumours, etc.**

- **Internet or mobile phone bullying**

- **Other - Other forms of bullying include interference with personal property, extortion, etc.**

2.2 Harrow Council-People First endorses the right of every pupil to be educated in an environment that is safe, secure and supportive. We strive to eradicate all forms of bullying and harassment in our schools.

In Harrow we take pride in being one of the most culturally rich and diverse boroughs in the United Kingdom. The Race Equality Scheme (2002-2005) has a vision that;
'In Harrow we will strive for a community which is cohesive and strong, where all have the widest range of opportunities to succeed and the capacity to achieve their aspirations, where no-one feels excluded, and where people are able to enjoy healthy and happy lives in an environment which is clean, safe and secure.'

We want all our pupils to enjoy an environment that is free from physical or emotional harm, harassment, victimisation or ridicule from other individuals or groups. Our aim is to work in partnership with schools to develop policies and practices, which promote awareness, understanding and mutual respect amongst pupils, and also to construct strategies for preventing and responding appropriately to bullying and harassment.

2.3 **The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires all schools to ensure that measures are in place to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. It is a statutory responsibility of all Governing Bodies to have an anti-bullying policy. The Local Authority expects schools to have specific anti – bullying policies and strategies that demonstrate or reflect their commitment to**:

- **Recognise and acknowledge that bullying and harassment exists in all schools and actively promote a greater understanding of the cause and effect of bullying, and related issues;**

- **Linking anti bullying approaches with Behaviour, Equal Opportunities, Race Equality, PSHE / Citizenship and Domestic Violence policy statements and thereby embedding it in the school ethos;**

- **Create strategies to reduce all forms of bullying and harassment within the school community including school-related bullying on the journey to and from school;**

- **Accept that bullying has implications for all and success in responding to bullying involves everyone;**

- **Appropriately and effectively challenging racism, sexism, hetrosexism, homophobia, disabilitism, ageism and other attitudes and behaviours that may result in bullying or harassment of different**

groups in society, such as faith groups, or of individuals, for example because of their appearance, disfigurement and/or size;

- Establish effective responses to bullying and harassment which include an awareness and understanding that good practice involves working through a multi – agency approach, including statutory and non-statutory agencies e.g. Educational Social Work Service, Victim Support and NSPCC;

- Audit current levels of bullying and set procedures in place to record, monitor, report and review levels, types and incidences of bullying. Pupils should be consulted throughout and be invited to participate actively in the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and regular reviewing of the agreed strategies;

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the anti-bullying policy and the procedures they should follow;

- Ensure that pupils, parents and carers are regularly informed of the school's anti-bullying policy and initiatives and that they have a named member of staff they can contact (anonymously if they wish) if they have concerns about bullying.

2.6 The Principal Adviser (Inclusion) has recently (November 2005) reissued guidelines to all schools to enable them to revisit their policy and practice. The Curriculum Leader for Personal Social and Health Education is also the Healthy Schools coordinator and as part of her work contributes to schools' development of their anti-bullying policy and practice. Colleagues from a range of services have provided training and guidance in the setting up and monitoring of anti bullying policies. There is a wealth of resources available to schools. Many Local Authority schools have developed successful models of peer intervention and support for young victims and perpetrators. Where effective action against bullying is a key feature of school life and where the anti-bullying policy is a 'live' policy, bullying is minimised. During Inspections of the last three years by Ofsted, Harrow schools are shown to have effective anti-bullying policy and practice.

2.7 The Local Authority intends to undertake the following:

a. Circulate the policy widely and ensure that its contents are publicised in all relevant sectors of the council, including other directorates and in particular schools and governing bodies.

b. Provide very clear guidelines as to effective ways to handle incidents of bullying and harassment.

c. Ensure that appropriate training is available to all staff and governors within its services in order that everyone is fully aware and sensitive to incidents of bullying and harassment and that

they are clear about the appropriate procedures for dealing with such incidents.

d.   Set out clear guidelines for schools to monitor incidents of bullying and harassment.

e.   Devise a mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

f.   Provide support to schools to develop or improve their Equal Opportunities and Anti-bullying policies thus promoting positive responses to bullying, racial and other types of harassment.

2.8   Harrow Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), chaired by the Director of Children's Services, has lead responsibility on anti-bullying in Harrow. This new multi-agency body, set up in October 2004 to replace the Area Child Protection Committee following the Children Act 2004 has a role in prevention and the promotion of children's welfare as well as child protection. In fulfilling this role, and following consultation with young people throughout the borough, the Board launched an anti-bullying campaign. This involved the setting up of a multi-agency steering group, including voluntary agencies and faith groups and piloting an "open day" at the Wealdstone centre in April 2004. Following on from the evaluation of this event, a further event was held at St. George's Shopping Centre on Saturday 19th November to launch National Anti-Bullying Week. The voluntary agency, Family Learning Network, designed and wrote anti-bullying leaflets for parents. A young person designed a poster on anti-bullying, used in all the publicity on this subject.

Over 350 children and young people completed questionnaires, which, among other things asked them about where they would seek help if they were bullied and also directly asked them the question "are you being bullied". This questionnaire is being analysed this month and results will be available in February. This is the LSCB's way of taking the first steps towards establishing the extent of incidents in the Borough. Questionnaires also went out to all schools. One of the key indicators set out in "Every Child Matters" is to find out the percentage of 11-15 year olds who state they have been bullied in the last 12 months. By February information will have been gleaned from the questionnaire to form a baseline. The LSCB will do the same exercise again next year and make a comparison of the figures.

2.9   A common misunderstanding occasionally exists between schools and parents in the management of complaints around bullying. There is a need to support parents and schools in communicating with one another and minimising incidents of bullying by involving pupils, staff, parents and governors in overcoming any obstacles and ensuring policies work on a day-to-day basis.

2.10 Truancy

In September 2005 Harrow Council's Education Welfare Service moved into First Contact, Social Care. The integrated children's services is committed to delivering the best services for children and families in an ever changing and complex world of law, regulation, targets and guidance. Harrow Education Service is well supported by key partners in health, schools, and the voluntary sector and the police. From January 2005 – January 2006 Harrow Council's Education Welfare Service and the Police Carried out a series of spot-checks on young people of school age on the streets of Harrow during school hours. As with previous years there were very small numbers of school children found to be absent without authorisation. Of the 113 school children that were stopped during this time; 35 had no valid reason for being out of school. Each of these children were monitored and followed up by the Education Welfare Service. Indeed, the success in Harrow in "joined-up" working is a vital factor in bringing about positive change for young people and families.

Harrow Education Welfare Service has effective systems and procedures in place to ensure that in Harrow "Attendance Matters". The preventative model and good relationship with schools ensures that early patterns of non-attendance are identified and ensures that Harrow remains high in the attendance league nationally. In 2004-05 national attendance data shows Harrow ranked 9th nationally on overall attendance

2.11 Harrow Education Service has the responsibility to ensure that any concerns over attendance are followed up; during the first reporting of this academic year, 95 children were defined as 'missing from education' for four consecutive weeks or more.

The reasons are as follows:

School refuser	22
NOR (yr 11 – going to be offered college)	5
Travelling	1
Earthquake in Pakistan	3
Holiday	6
Family missing (other agency involvement)	5
Withdrawn (bereavement)	1
Excluded from school	3
Child missing (other agency involvement)	3
Illness	16
Unknown at present	7
Moved not in new school (includes abroad)	23
Total	95

Out of the 22 identified as school refusing the factors identified do not include bullying. Harrow Education Welfare Service is committed to

working with all agencies to ensure bullying is identified, addressed and all young people are listened to and supported.

2.12 Options considered   N/A

2.13 Consultation   N/A

2.14 Financial Implications N/A

2.15 Legal Implications: It is a statutory responsibility of all Governing Bodies of schools and colleges to have an anti-bullying policy

2.16 Equalities Impact

2.17 Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Policy Guidance on Anti-Bullying & Anti-Harassment for Schools