



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Between November 2016 and June 2017 the Equalities and Human Rights Committee (EHRiC) undertook an inquiry to examine the issue of prejudice-based bullying and harassment of children and young people in schools.

This followed a request by EHRiC for the Scottish Government to pause the roll out of its refreshed anti-bullying strategy, *Respect for All*, after MSPs heard concerns from groups representing young people with a protected characteristic. The Scottish Government agreed to pause the refresh strategy in order to allow the Committee examine the issues and make recommendations.

The inquiry took oral evidence, in both public and private, from a wide range of groups and organisations, including some very powerful testimony from young people. MSPs also undertook fact-finding visits to schools and met with teachers, students and youth representatives.

On 6 July 2021 EHRiC published its findings and recommendations in its report: [*It is not Cool to be Cruel: Prejudice based bullying and harassment of children and young people in schools.*](#)

EHRiC found a pressing need to tackle bullying in Scottish schools through changing attitudes and behaviour amongst young people and teaching staff. It identified a need for young people to understand the consequences of bullying behaviour, to feel able to challenge bullying and to be supported by teachers and adults as necessary.

The Committee made 29 recommendations of which the key findings were:

- For all teachers to get the right training in tackling prejudice-based bullying and harassment
- For all schools to have an actively inclusive culture and ethos
- For education on consent, healthy relationships and human rights to start from the earliest age possible, and to continue to be taught throughout school
- For the regular updating of the national anti-bullying strategy, *Respect for All*, including public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny
- For clearly understood definitions of what constitutes bullying or harassment, as well as
- For the mandatory recording of bullying incidents from all schools so progress, and the collection of robust data to measure the progress of the strategy, including through the school inspection system

A [summary of all 29 recommendations](#) is set out in the Executive Summary to the Committee's report.

The [inquiry page, also including links to evidence and responses to the Committee's report](#).

The Scottish Government [responded to the Committee's recommendations](#) on 1 September 2017 with a letter from the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney MSP. The Scottish Government agreed with most of the Committee's recommendations.

Keeping in touch

For further information on the Committee you can—

- Contact the Equalities and Human Rights Committee by emailing equalities.humanrights@parliament.scot
- You can contact the Committee clerks on 0131 348 5223 or 0131 348 6040.
- You can follow the EHRiC Committee on Twitter: [@SP_EHRiC](https://twitter.com/SP_EHRiC)
- We welcome calls using the Text Relay service or in BSL through contactscotland-bsl.org/
- You can find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/scottishparliament
- If you have any general questions you also can also text us on 07786 209 888
- You can ask questions online through live chat: www.parliament.scot/live-chat

