



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Laura Nuttall MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Education and Early Childhood

Redirected to:

Reference: Education

Hearing: 17 February 2025

In relation to: Bullying

Question received: 19/02/2025

Answer Due: 26/02/25

What definition of bullying does the education directorate use for the purposes of instructing teachers what to report?

Ms Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

For the purpose of incident reporting, the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy defines bullying as *'ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one of more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those including bystanders. Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying'*.

For those schools that have implemented Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL), through Module 6, teachers are provided with further information which defines bullying as either minor or major. Minor incidents of bullying are defined as: *'ongoing and deliberate low-level misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause social and/or psychological harm'*. Major incidents of bullying are defined as: *'ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause social and/or psychological harm Examples include racial bullying, ostracism, and sharing images without consent, behaviours that continue after intervention and/or causes increased harm'*.

Schools that have not implemented PBL refer to the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy definition and determine severity at the school level.

OFFICIAL

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' or 'B' shape with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Date:

27/02/25

By the Minister for Education and Early Childhood, Ms Yvette Berry MLA