



Young People's Rights Review

Robbie Burgess MSYP - Bullying

Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Robbie Burgess and I am a Member for the Scottish Youth Parliament for the Falkirk West Constituency. During my consultation I have consulted 90 constituents through online surveys, high schools, youth groups and community centres. After long conversations, the right's issue that kept occurring was bullying: all types of bullying. A common issue to those in Falkirk, from my constituents and my own experiences, bullying affects young people's mental, emotional and physical state and can lead them to be depressed or suicidal. This can be a major issue as it can lead to young people or children not wanting to go to school causing them to miss out on education which is vital to their future. One constituent told me they are scared to leave the school grounds as bullies will wait for them at the school entrance leaving them feeling vulnerable - resulting in them having to get picked up by relatives.

Another constituent told me they had been called names and attacked at school verbally and physically to the extent that they had to leave school. I've heard many more examples - this is just the tip of the iceberg. Young people have the right to be safe at school and free from discrimination. It should not be the case that children and young people are put in a position where they feel scared, isolated or different at school. We must tackle bullying in general so people aren't put in such vulnerability or feel like they are being punished for something that isn't their fault. So this is why I welcome the '*Respect for All : The National Approach to Anti - Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*', referred to in paragraph 7.6 of the Scottish Government's Children and Young People's Rights Action Plan. This document sets out how it affects young people and children, and how to combat bullying on all platforms.

I urge the Government in its plan to expand on how it will deliver this strategy in practise and transform it into an anti-bullying culture in Scotland. For example, as per the UN recommendation from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's 2016 review of the UK: Paragraph 49: The Committee recommends that the State party: Intensify its efforts to tackle bullying and violence in schools by monitoring regularly the incidences of bullying at school and involving children in the initiatives and monitoring aimed at eliminating bullying.

To finish off, I will say this it is 2018 and no young person or child should be denied their rights to education and safety at school because of bullying, not knowing where the next punch or push will come from, or the next cyber text or other humiliation. Schools must do more to protect young people and children from bullying so by supporting this in the strategy we can tackle anti bullying issues; so I say let's go forwards not backwards and give young people and children a safe environment, thank you!