

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL
EDUCATION, CULTURE & SPORT SERVICE**

BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

This document is available to download from the
Highland Council
Support for Learners website



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1. Context

This Positive Relationships Policy together with the Support for Learners Policy Framework are key elements of Highland Council's policy framework for supporting the needs of all children and young people.

These policies reflect the recommendations made in various documents by the Scottish Executive eg For Scotland's Children (2001b), Better Behaviour, Better Learning (2001a), the Education Act (2004b), Working Together to Improve School Discipline (2006b), the Children's Charter (2004c) etc. They also reflect the vision and strategy supported by Highland's Joint Committee for Children and Young People as indicated in For Highland's Children 2, that children and young people have the right to be:

Safe
Healthy
Active
Nurtured
Achieving
Respected and Responsible and
Included

It is acknowledged that some children and young people will present challenges to their families, schools and communities at times in relation to the behaviours they engage in and there will be a variety of ways in which discipline and support for children and young people is provided. However, research clearly shows that by focusing on building positive relationships and by setting a positive and inclusive ethos in the school, many issues can be avoided and their effects greatly diminished.

2. Rationale

The essence of this Positive Relationships Policy is to:

- Value every child.
- Maintain high expectations of the children/young people themselves, schools, support services and the community.
- Bring the work of all agencies together.
- Address behaviour issues early.

3. Introduction

Supporting the social and emotional development of all children and young people is a shared responsibility for the whole community: parents, carers, families, friends, neighbours and public, voluntary and private organisations.

With reference to A Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive 2004a), Highland Council and all Highland schools have specific obligations to ensure that young people learn about and develop the values on which Scottish society is based and to help them develop their own personal views on social justice and personal and collective responsibility (www.hvlc.org.uk/ace/). The curriculum is seen as an important means through which this personal development can be encouraged and as such schools are tasked with ensuring that all children and young people become:

- Effective Contributors
- Successful Learners
- Confident Individuals
- Responsible Citizens

When children and young people are nurtured, guided and encouraged, they learn to behave appropriately in a variety of social and educational settings and develop positive relationships. They achieve healthy emotional growth, acquire social understanding and learn the necessary social and inter-personal skills that will enable them to succeed. Children and young people who face barriers to learning and development require help, support, strategies and understanding, within a calm, controlled environment.

This policy sets out how Highland Council will meet its responsibilities for promoting the social and emotional development of all children and young people. It provides a framework within which schools and other services can develop their own strategies.

4. Statement of Core Values

All children and young people are valued irrespective of their needs, behaviour or background. They must be given the opportunity to enjoy and achieve, stay healthy and safe, make a positive contribution to their community, have a sense of belonging in their learning environment and improve life choices and chances.

Parents, carers and their local communities, supported by statutory and voluntary agencies (including Highland Council and schools), have shared responsibilities to maximise the life chances of every child. One of these responsibilities is to promote the social and emotional development of children and young people through collaboration, innovation and celebration of their successes and support them in developing appropriate strategies for overcoming difficulties.

Most pupils should attend mainstream school settings and have the support of mainstream services for all or most of their education. The Highland Council maintains some specialist provision and continues to make use of national specialist residential schools for a few pupils with very high levels of need. Research conclusively demonstrates the negative effects on life chances of those pupils whose education is disrupted and who spend time out of school (HMIE(a) 2006, HMIE(b) 2006).

Highland Council recognises and acclaims the achievement of schools in promoting inclusive practices and providing for the social and emotional development needs of all children and young people. It values universal approaches to enhancing resilience/emotional literacy, which avoid excluding or stigmatising vulnerable groups.

5. Building Capacity

5.1 Building capacity in schools

Schools are complex structures within which a range of multi-agency staff support the learning of pupils. This policy seeks to help educational practitioners to work along side partner agencies to effectively support all pupils and to develop resilience/emotional literacy in all pupils as a fundamental aspect of their curricular experiences (Scottish Executive 2006a).

5.2 Supporting Schools and Promoting Best Practice

Highland Council will work in partnership with schools to assist them in building their capacity to provide high quality inclusive education for all pupils by promoting best practice to:

- Develop an inclusive ethos and culture to embrace the needs of their community.
- Provide informal mentoring and emotional coaching on a day to day basis, providing care, understanding and social support to individuals.

- Support learning and teaching across all areas of the curriculum (www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk/ltt/policy/policy.htm www.hvlc.org.uk/ace/)
- Support the individual needs of children and young people with additional support needs (<http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/policyframework/>).
- Develop effective leadership and management at all levels so that every child is in a well led school and every leader is a learner. (www.highlandsd.co.uk/leadership.htm).
- Provide continuous professional development opportunities for all staff with access to information and advice on national and local training events.
- Promote, amongst teachers and other staff, the development of coaching skills and an understanding of how to positively influence behaviour, rather than control it. (<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/positivebehaviour/index.asp>).
- Encourage implementation of effective measures to combat bullying. (www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C7CBB009-09D5-4C2B-B005-4C21D7D00F3/0/raceequalitypolicy.pdf).
- Monitor, evaluate and improve their own practice through action research. (www.highlandschools.virtualib.org.uk/ltt/lifelong/teacher_self.htm)

5.3 Developing and Sharing Curriculum Approaches

Highland Council will work with schools to help them to develop and share appropriate curriculum approaches to:

- Provide educational experiences which are emotionally nurturing for pupils. (www.hvlc.org.uk/ace/)
- Emphasise rights, respect and responsibilities within the curriculum.
- Identify and address any learning needs which have created barriers to learning and promote teaching approaches which cater for a variety of personal and learning styles.
(Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.
www.hvlc.org.uk/ace/)
- Promote curriculum approaches which are sufficiently flexible and engaging to take account of pupils' difficulties in social relationships including opportunities for individual support and teaching, counselling and guidance, and social skills development. (www.hvlc.org.uk/)
- Use the curriculum at all times to create circumstances under which children and young people are motivated through developing a sense of self, sense of power and a sense of belonging.

- Support young people in developing skills for work.

5.4 Building Capacity in the Local Authority

In order to be effective in helping schools to build capacity, Highland Council recognises that there is a need to build its own capacity in supporting the Additional Support Needs of every child and young person. Highland Council will:

- Work intensively to ensure that all services and departments of the Council, in addition to other statutory and voluntary agencies, see ASN as an essential element of their planning and provision.
- Ensure that local authority services collaborate effectively. (www.forhighlandschildren.org/).
- Interpret government legislation and guidance at a local level. (<http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/policiesprotocolsguidelines.htm>).
- Develop the diversity and capacity of its staffing in order to deliver its policy more effectively.
- Provide joint training opportunities for all those involved.

6. Providing Services

6.1 Providing Services for Schools and Educational Establishments

Schools are in the forefront of providing for children's needs, but there are times when someone from outside the school can work effectively with school staff to find new ways forward.

Highland Council will ensure that access to specialist services is well sign-posted, user friendly and leads to timely, evidence based interventions that demonstrably add value.

(<http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/parents.htm> , www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk.heps)

This will include developing preventative services for children and young people who are:

- At risk of exclusion.
- Emotionally vulnerable.
- Looked after.
- Or otherwise at risk.

6.2 Providing Services for Parents and Carers

Highland Council will work with statutory and voluntary partners to:

- Listen to what children and young people have to say about the services provided for them.
(www.highlandyouthvoice.org/
www.highlandchildrensforum.org
www.sccyp.org.uk/)
- Ensure that ASN, disability discrimination and equalities legislation and policies are implemented.
(www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/55D57C7F-C9FB-48BE-B339-EE8C62CDBBF0/0/ECS46.pdf
www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F594C029-D092-4D45-9AA3-5C598EF99C36/0/DisabilityEqualityScheme.pdf)
- Provide services to children and their families to promote wellbeing and success.
(www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/CE2F8D0E-9DF2-4963-8ACA-95A156455E5D/0/CYP41.pdf),
- Tackle bullying and harassment.
- Promote early identification and intervention of ASN.
(www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/policiesprotocolsguidelines.htm),
www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk/slpf/)
- Promote effective attendance.
- Provide opportunities for on line learning. (www.hvlc.org.uk/)
- Direct children and young people away from anti-social behaviour.

Highland Council will support the small number of children and young people who are out of school, with programmes that respond to the identified needs of individual learners. There is a need to re-engage them in their learning and, in most cases, return them to school.

Within Highland Council there is a multi-disciplinary Looked After Children's team to promote the education of children looked after by the authority. Within this group of children and young people those at risk of exclusion are a high priority. Further information on this team can be obtained by contacting valerie.gunn@highland.gov.uk

Specialist support services are available for other groups at risk as a result of having specific needs

e.g. ethnic minority members,

(Contact: may.hughes@highland.gov.uk)

travellers and interrupted learners

(Contact: karen.mcmaster@highland.gov.uk)

children and young people with autism spectrum disorders,

(Contact: myna.dowds@highland.gov.uk)

Other related Highland Council policies and practice papers can be accessed on the Highland Council's website. These include policies on exclusion, physical intervention, early years, the NEET strategy, transitions etc. Many can be found at <http://www.highland.gov.uk/learninghere/supportforlearners/policiesprotocolsguide/lines.htm>

7. References

- A Curriculum for Excellence - The Curriculum Review Group*, Scottish Executive, 2004a
- Better Behaviour, Better learning Report of the Discipline Task Group*, Scottish Executive, 2001a
- Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act*, Scottish Executive, 2004b
- For Highland's Children 2*, The Highland Council, 2005
- For Scotland's Children*, Scottish Executive, 2001b
- Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People: the role of schools in delivering integrated children's services*, Scottish Executive, 2006a
- Improving Scottish Education: a report by HMIE on inspection and review 2002-2005*, HMIE, 2006a
- Missing Out: a report on children at risk of missing out on educational opportunities*, HMIE, 2006b
- Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter*, Scottish Executive, 2004c
- Working Together to Improve School Discipline: Discipline Stakeholder Group Joint Action Plan*, Scottish Executive, 2006b