

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE20 April 2023Report by Director of EducationPROMOTING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOUR IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE
ELC SETTINGS AND SCHOOLS**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Education Committee approval of the revised Standard Circular 21 Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in East Renfrewshire Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Education Committee is asked to:
 - a. Approve and comment on the updated Standard Circular Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in East Renfrewshire Settings and Schools.
 - b. Ask the Director of Education to take appropriate steps to ensure its implementation in all schools and early learning and childcare settings.

BACKGROUND

3. The Additional Support for Learning Scotland Act (2004, updated in 2009) states that the key duties on education authorities are to identify, make provision for, and review provision for the additional support needs of children and young people for whose education they are responsible. This includes additional support needs which may lead to dysregulated behaviours where children and young people are not able to manage their emotions in the same way that others can.

4. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, aims for Scotland to be the first country in the UK to directly incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law and several of the articles of the UNCRC relate directly to the importance of healthy relationships for children and young people.

5. Angela Morgan's [Review of implementation of additional support for learning](#) highlights the importance of relationships and its link to behaviour in schools and following this review, East Renfrewshire Education Department implemented our own Review of Additional Support for Learning and the results of this were shared at Education Committee on [3 Feb 2022](#). A number of recommendations were agreed including:

- Implement trauma informed practices and nurturing approaches across all schools and early years settings, underpinned by relationship-based approaches.

- In partnership with children and young people and parents/carers, update the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, including seclusion and restraint guidelines which take account of national guidelines currently being produced.

6. 'Included, Engaged and Involved' is a suite of national publications with guidance around specific aspects of supporting our most vulnerable learners through preventing school avoidance (part 1, 2019), preventing school exclusions through restorative and solution-focused approaches (part 2, 2017) and draft guidance on reducing the need for restraint and seclusion (part 3, 2022).

7. The Education Department's policy has been revised in light of updated policy advice, also taking cognisance of current legislation and guidance in the area of support for pupils. Following implementation of this paper, East Renfrewshire Standard Circular 8 Included, Engaged and Involved: Managing School Exclusions will be updated to take account of the newly developed Part 3 of the Included, Engaged and Involved documents and will be brought to a future Education Committee.

REPORT

8. The updated Standard Circular Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in East Renfrewshire ELC settings and schools is provided in appendix 1. The revised policy sets the current national context for approaches to promoting positive behaviour and supports the rationale and aims through reference to research and national and local guidelines on support for pupils.

9. It is based on the belief that all schools should provide an ethos of support characterised by a nurturing approach which should underpin policies and practices in all areas, including the promotion and management of positive behaviour.

10. Behaviour that causes concern can indicate underlying anxieties and trauma, and can be the main barrier to learning. The approach taken to managing this should be one of understanding of triggers, trauma and support for de-escalation through early intervention and nurturing relationships. For many of our most vulnerable children and young people, particularly those who are looked after, school may be the one safe and consistent place for the development of positive relationships.

11. In line with national guidelines, the policy includes a range of strategies to support staff in schools to recognise the needs of pupils and respond appropriately in order to meet the needs of all learners and ensure successful outcomes. These include:

- School nurture provisions and authority enhanced nurture base
- Outreach Services
- Behaviour Support Strategies (BSS)
- Restorative practices / approaches (as incidents occur and as appropriate)
- Solution oriented approaches
- Framework for Intervention
- Partnership working

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

12. There are no financial implications for the department or schools related to this paper.

CONSULTATION

13. As part of the ERC ASL Review, stakeholders including parents, carers, children and young people and education staff were consulted on a range of themes related to additional support needs including Promoting Positive Behaviour. As highlighted, a number of recommendations were made as a result of the feedback and this has been incorporated into the updated Standard Circular.

14. A working group of Education staff across our Early Learning and Childcare settings and schools, Educational Psychologists and Education Officers have contributed to the creation of this updated Standard Circular.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

15. An Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the final version of the policy.

CONCLUSION

16. The revised Standard Circular 21 Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in East Renfrewshire ELC settings and schools seeks to update practice in promoting positive behaviour in schools through linking current research and policy such as the Morgan Review, Getting it Right for Every Child, The Promise and UNCRC to best practice within all education establishments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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Mark Ratter
Director of Education
20 April 2023

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Standard Circular 21 Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in East Renfrewshire Settings and Schools.

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Council
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TO: HEADS OF ALL EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Dear Colleague

**STANDARD CIRCULAR 21: PROMOTING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS
AND BEHAVIOUR IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE ELC SETTINGS AND
SCHOOLS**

Contents:

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1. Background

“Developing good relationships and positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and wider community is essential for creating the right environment for effective learning and teaching. Where children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure and when their achievements and contributions are valued and celebrated, they are more likely to develop self-confidence, resilience and positive views about themselves.” Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour (2013)

The vision statement of East Renfrewshire Council’s Education Department is ‘*Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*’ and this commitment continues to guide the values of the work of the department and its ELC settings and schools. Inclusion is a value that sits at the heart of our education provision. This policy outlines our position on promoting positive relationships and positive behaviour in our ELC settings and schools, to ensure that all learners are included and meet their potential.

Curriculum for Excellence has as its core principles the entitlement of children and young people:

- to experience a curriculum which is coherent from 3 to 18;
- to experience a broad general education including a senior phase where he or she can continue to develop the four capacities and also obtain qualifications;
- to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work, with a continuous focus on literacy and numeracy and health and wellbeing;
- to personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities which *Curriculum for Excellence* can provide; and,
- to support in moving into a positive and sustained destination.

The Additional Support for Learning Scotland Act (2004, updated in 2009) states that the key duties on education authorities are to identify, make provision for, and review provision for the additional support needs of children and young people for whose education they are responsible. This includes additional support needs which may lead to dysregulated behaviours.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) became incorporated into Scottish law in March 2021. Several of the articles relate directly to the importance of healthy relationships for children and young people.

- Children have a right to education (Article 28)
- Children have the right to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education and fulfil their potential. (Article 29)
- Children need to be included, engaged and involved in their learning (Article 12)
- Wellbeing, positive relationships and an inclusive ethos and culture are the

foundation of learning (Articles 2, 3, 6, 23 and 31)

There has been a great deal of additional research published recently around relationships and behaviour in schools. The Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS) identified next steps and made key recommendations in *Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research (2017)*. In response to this, Education Scotland published new guidance, [Developing a positive whole-school ethos and culture - Relationships, Learning and Behaviour](#).

[Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in Educational Settings](#) (Education Scotland, 2023) highlights the shift from traditional 'behaviour management' to a relational approach to supporting positive behaviour choices and states, *"We cannot manage someone else's behaviour however we can use our relationship to support them to change their own behaviour to something that is more positive and healthy for them."*

Angela Morgan's [review of implementation of additional support for learning](#) (the ASL Review, 2020) has been hugely significant for Scottish education, and its findings have had a tangible impact on practice. Morgan takes into account the experiences of children and young people who have required additional support at school, and in her report she discusses directly the importance of relationships and its link to behaviour:

"A school's culture, ethos, values and team mind-set, evidenced in practice by the school's leadership, is critical in establishing the positive environment in which all children and young people feel included and can flourish. This underpinning is essential for a culture where children and young people are respected."
(Section 7, Relationships and Behaviour)

'Included, Engaged and Involved' is a suite of publications with guidance around specific aspects of supporting our most vulnerable learners, specifically addressing attendance ([Included, engaged and involved: part 1 - attendance in Scottish schools](#)), preventing school exclusions through restorative and solution-focused approaches ([Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions](#)) and reducing the need for physical restraint and seclusion ([Included, Engaged and involved part 3: A relationship and rights based approach to physical intervention in Scottish schools](#)). Our approaches to these areas of support are in line with this set of guidance documents.

Education Scotland maintains, *"All adults in an educational establishment should know why relationships are important in creating a learning environment and take personal responsibility for building and maintaining relationships with learners, parents and each other. In this way, adults can model the behaviour they would like to see."* All establishments are expected to have in place clear promoting positive relationships policies based on nurturing, trauma-informed practice, which ensures a consistent approach to improving relationships and behaviour across East Renfrewshire.

2. Culture and Climate

East Renfrewshire Council's Education Department believes all ELC settings and schools should provide an ethos of support characterised by a nurturing approach at all ages and stages. The ethos of a school or early learning and childcare setting should be based on these approaches which should underpin its policies and practices in all areas, including the promotion and management of positive behaviour.

Children and young people will have opportunities to become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens if they are learning in a culture of care and respect. These values of respect and care lie at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence and a number of Education Department documents in relation to meeting the needs of children and young people: SC 8 Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2; and SC 12 Inclusion. The Education Department supports early identification of need, including social, emotional and behavioural needs. By intervening early and by adopting preventative measures, the negative long term impact of social, emotional and behavioural needs can be supported more effectively.

A nurturing school values every member of its community. All children and young people as individuals have strengths and aptitudes as well as difficulties that may require support. There is an understanding of the whole child and how home, school, community and individual circumstances can require different supports and pressures. The school's culture is one of welcome, tolerance and understanding that comes from the belief that all young people can succeed if given the right support at the right time as they develop into young adults. Children and young people are given stimulating learning experiences and a curriculum which is appropriate to and adapted for their needs. Learners understand the purpose of their learning; they take responsibility for their own learning and have a say in how their learning is planned and delivered. Nurture has been defined through six principles by Nurture UK:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally;
2. The classroom offers a safe base;
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing;
4. Language is a vital means of communication;
5. All behaviour is communication; and,
6. The importance of transition in children's lives.

Reflective questions to support establishments in evaluating their nurturing practice can be found via Education Scotland:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/inc55applyingnurturingapproaches120617.pdf>

Nurture UK can also support establishments through training, resources and accreditation.

All establishments should create an environment which is welcoming and conducive

to learning. Establishments should be accommodating to the needs of children and young people and show patience and tolerance where there are challenges for particular individuals. For some children and young people, targeted support may be required and this should also be nurturing in its approach.

Staff should recognise the needs of children and young people and respond appropriately. Behaviour that causes concern can indicate underlying anxieties and trauma, and can be the main barrier to learning. As such, a child wellbeing plan may be appropriate. The approach taken should be one of understanding of triggers, trauma and support for de-escalation through early intervention. Relationships between staff and children and young people (and between staff) are crucial to maintaining an ethos of support and understanding. For many of our most vulnerable children and young people, particularly those who are looked after, school may be the one safe and consistent place for the development of positive relationships.

A number of strategies and approaches are already successfully implemented in ELC settings and schools. These include:

- Nurture provisions
- Outreach Services
- Behaviour Support Strategies (BSS)
- Restorative practices / approaches (as incidents occur and as appropriate)
- Solution oriented approaches
- Framework for Intervention
- Enhanced nurture base
- Partnership Working

Further guidance on the appropriateness of each of the above and implementation of each is given in the section on Promoting Positive Behaviour Strategies. In addition, Psychological Services can work collaboratively with practitioners to build capacity to support the social, emotional and behavioural needs of children and young people through a number of interventions, for classes, groups or individuals.

3. A Partnership Approach

Partnership working is vital for meeting the needs of all learners, and ensuring successful outcomes. At the heart of excellent partnership work is excellent relationships, with ELC settings and schools working with other agencies to ensure that the best support can reach the appropriate children and young people and their families.

All establishments should have regular Joint Support Team (JST) meetings where partners discuss a child's additional support needs in a collaborative way. JSTs should be solution-focused and look at the factors that contribute to challenging behaviour and appropriate strategies for responding to these factors. A solution-focused JST would look at a child or young person's holistic strengths and what outcomes would move them forward rather than revisiting the challenges that brought the young person to the JST. More complex cases, such as children who

have a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) or Child's Multi-Agency Assessment and Plan (CMAP), will be discussed in separate case conferences.

Partners attending the JST will vary, but will always include the school's link Educational Psychologist and the ASN co-ordinator. Through the JST, referrals may be made to other partners within East Renfrewshire, for example: Healthier Minds; campus Police; CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service); and ERAAT (East Renfrewshire Autism Assessment Team). Other partners involved in the JST will vary according to the specific needs of the children and families, and could include Social Workers, Active Schools Co-ordinators, School Nursing Service, Health Visitors and, where appropriate, Family Learning, Youth Counsellors, Youth Workers and people who work for charities such as Women's Aid or Children 1st.

Children and young people who require further support from other teams within the authority, for example outreach services or specialist provision, are discussed and planned for through the Education Resource Group (ERG). The ERG will consider and allocate additional support if appropriate.

Data around supporting behaviour should be regularly reviewed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, to support early intervention and signposting to the appropriate partners. Data sources may include:

- the number of times the use of physical intervention has been required;
- Child Wellbeing Plan;
- the number and severity of incidents recorded using the Accident and Incident Reporting System (AIRS);
- the use of pupil support bases or nurture rooms;
- exclusion, attendance and attainment data;
- records of bullying and equalities incidents
- Pastoral Notes; and
- minutes from JST meetings.

4. Promoting Positive Behaviour

ELC settings and schools should ensure a sense of community where learners feel secure, nurtured and valued and where staff provide learners with clear expectations and boundaries in relation to behaviour. All staff in school should model appropriate behaviours and interactions. Training is offered to staff as appropriate through Psychological Services, Healthier Minds and the Quality Improvement team.

Within East Renfrewshire Council there is a focus on building and promoting positive behaviour between staff and children and young people alike. This encompasses all aspects of the school community including any external agencies such as Social Work, CAMHS and Educational Psychologists.

The **ethos** within East Renfrewshire ELC settings and schools should be based on an atmosphere of mutual respect whereby children and young people experience positive interactions with all adults and have an opportunity to build strong foundations which will support their holistic development. Playrooms and

classrooms should be nurturing, trauma-informed and provide a safe space for children and young people.

Framework for Intervention is a support for classroom teachers in reducing the incidence of low level disruption that can have a negative impact on learning. This involves the use of a self-evaluation checklist and then observation and support from a trained and supportive colleague. This support can be offered to all staff and can also be used for whole school and environment audits such as the playground.

Behaviour Support Strategies (BSS) is a training programme for staff which focusses on the use of proactive support for the management of behaviour that causes concern. It is a step by step process for crisis prevention and intervention which emphasises physical intervention strategies will only be used as a very last resort to keep children and young people and staff safe from physical harm. ELC settings and schools will work in collaboration with their link Educational Psychologist and BSS Instructors to complete a training needs analysis. This process will identify the number of staff requiring training in the use of physical interventions and which specific physical interventions they need to be taught. Only those members of staff working with identified children and young people, where there is a foreseeable risk of physical harm, will be trained in the use of physical intervention strategies. The ongoing need for this training will be monitored closely.

ELC settings and schools offering **nurture provision** recognise that some children and young people have significant gaps in their emotional development including their ability to form and maintain secure and trusting relationships. These gaps impact on their ability and receptiveness to learn. A nurturing setting sees the importance of every child and/or young person having a sense of belonging, gives opportunities for engagement and positive role models and gives prominence to emotional literacy. Some settings will have a dedicated nurture room where children can access the additional nurturing support they require.

Some children and young people may need access to a separate area, for example a Pupil Support Base whether by their own choice, and with prior arrangement, as a strategy for when they recognise that they are struggling with managing their behaviour. They may access the base on return from exclusion if a period of reintegration to being full time in class is agreed as necessary. The base could also be the setting for planned programmes of work with children and young people to address behavioural needs. Use of the base should be monitored by a designated member of the senior management team and should be considered as part of the planning process.

Exclusion

Exclusion of a child or young person must be carefully considered as to its impact for the child or young person and on the behaviour that led to consideration of exclusion. Exclusion would only ever be used as a last resort. Detailed guidance on exclusion is given in SC 8 Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2; A positive

approach to preventing and managing school exclusions

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The authority will:

- support ELC settings and schools to create a safe environment that is conducive to learning for all children and young people;
- set high expectations of all children and young people;
- help ELC settings and schools in the identification of specific needs;
- provide professional learning for all staff on approaches that are successful in dealing with and responding to inappropriate or challenging behaviour;
- work closely with partners and parents to deliver appropriate supports;
- maintain a specialist team of Social Emotional Behavioural Needs (SEBN) professionals to work with children, young people and families and with staff.

The Psychological Service will:

- attend and contribute to the regular joint support team meetings in ELC settings and schools;
- give advice and training to staff on general approaches to promoting positive behaviour and relationships;
- help to identify possible triggers and assess underlying causes for challenging behaviours;
- give specific advice for the support of individual children and young people;
- work with parents and help families to support their children; and,
- discuss children and young people at ERG.

SEBN Team will:

- respond to referrals from the ERG;
- focus on building a positive relationship with the child or young person;
- adopt an approach of least intrusion;
- observe children and young people in different contexts and offer advice and support on how best to respond to challenging behaviours;
- support ELC settings and schools in the development of child wellbeing plans
- work on a one to one or group basis as appropriate to address particular targets;
- build capacity for inclusion, equality, achievement and developing sustainability within our ELC settings and schools;
- support ELC settings and schools to develop best practice;
- provide participative approaches that are both empowering and enabling to all children and young people, staff, families and carers;
- deliver a multi-disciplinary approach to ensure all needs are met; and,
- support Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) for all staff in meeting social, emotional and behavioural needs.

ELC settings and schools will:

- create and sustain a nurturing ethos for children and young people, staff and parents and carers;
- establish and maintain high expectations on standards of behaviour for all stakeholders;
- teach appropriate behaviour through the curriculum, the example set by all staff and the ethos of the school;
- develop their own policy on promoting positive behaviour in line with authority and national guidance
- create stimulating and supportive learning environments for all children and young people;
- make sure children and young people are given opportunities to make their views known and listen to them;
- work with partners to support children, young people and their parents/carers and families to achieve the high standards expected for all children and young people; and,
- ensure that only staff with appropriate training are involved in Restorative Practices.

Practitioners will:

- maintain high expectations for all children and young people in terms of behaviour;
- model the behaviours that they expect from children and young people;
- follow school policy in addressing social, emotional and behavioural needs;
- maintain an ethos of nurture and support in their playrooms / classrooms;
- devise routines and rules with children and young people;
- differentiate their responses and be flexible in responding to a range of behaviours and needs; and,
- seek advice and support from appropriate staff.

Parents and carers will:

- work in partnership with and support ELC settings and schools;
- reinforce and support policy on promoting positive behaviour;
- engage with ELC settings and schools attending meetings and reviews; and,
- communicate with ELC setting and schools about any issues that may affect their child's learning.

Children and young people, as appropriate to their age, stage and needs, will:

- contribute to the development of policy;
- follow the agreed code of behaviour in their establishments and classrooms;
- engage fully in their learning in the classroom and beyond;
- show respect for their learning and that of others;
- be aware of their rights and responsibilities;
- take responsibility for their behaviour; and,

- listen to staff and other children and young people and be listened to also

6. Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Evaluating the Policy

ELC settings and schools will develop their own policy on Promoting Positive Relationships reflecting national and local guidance. The impact of this policy will be monitored and quality assured through:

- Collaborative Improvement Visits;
- reviews by Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate, as appropriate;
- analysis of attendance and exclusion statistics;
- referrals to the Education Resource Group;
- number of children and young people accessing out of authority placements.