

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

25 AUGUST 2011

PREVENTING AND MANAGING SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS IN ANGUS:
REVISED GUIDANCE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to advise elected members of the publication of revised guidance for Angus head teachers in relation to exclusion from school.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee:
- (i) note the terms of this report
 - (ii) note that the Angus guidance document, which takes account of updated national guidance, is available electronically at:
[Appendix - Exclusion Guidance for Head Teachers](#)
copies of which are available for perusal in the Members' Lounge.
 - (iii) note that the corresponding national document, is available electronically at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/17095258/0>.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 New national guidance in respect of exclusions from school, *'Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Managing School Exclusions'*, was published by the Scottish Government in March 2011
- 2.2 The purpose of this new national guidance is to clarify policy on exclusion from schools in the context of changing national and local government responsibilities, and aims for children and young people. The overarching aim of the revised guidance is to support school communities and their partners to keep all learners fully included, engaged and involved in their education.
- 2.3 The new guidance is closely informed by the principles of *Getting It Right* and the entitlements of learners, framed within Curriculum for Excellence national advice documents.

3 REVISED ANGUS GUIDANCE

- 3.1 Revised local guidance, *'Preventing and Managing School Exclusions in Angus: Guidance for Head Teachers'*, has been developed by a sub-group of the Additional Support Needs Joint Action Group, which was chaired by the Principal Educational Psychologist and which included primary and secondary head teachers, as well as colleagues from other Children's Services.
- 3.2 The revised local guidance offers Angus schools and head teachers an accessible and helpful synopsis of the very lengthy and comprehensive national document.
- 3.3 Aside from basic information and advice about the legislative context for school exclusion procedures, the Angus guidance document provides detailed advice in relation to three key areas, namely:

- staged intervention: prevention and early intervention
- consideration of individual circumstances
- decision-making, managing exclusions and re-engagement.

The following sections provide in turn a summary of the key advice offered in each of these areas.

4 STAGED INTERVENTION: PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

- 4.1 The focus of the guidance is on prevention, early intervention and responding to individual need so that children and young people get the help they need when they need it through multi-agency engagement in the Angus five stage intervention process.
- 4.2 Staged intervention ranges from universal provision (**Stage 1**) where effective learning and teaching is taking place, and positive relationships and behaviour are being promoted through the school's agreed behaviour policy/whole school approaches.
- 4.3 **Stage 2 (Making Connections)** recognises that improving the outcomes for learners at risk of exclusion requires universal providers to work together to meet needs early and effectively.
- 4.4 Where a learner needs a network of support involving different agencies then a child/young person's planning meeting should be held at **Stage 3**.
- 4.5 Where extended support for pupils (ESP) is indicated, this should be considered at **Stage 4**. While ESP can mean a range of support within school, it is recognised that, for a small minority of pupils, educational provision outwith school may be necessary and appropriate.
- 4.6 Where there is the need for out of authority resources such as residential school or secure care, this decision will be taken at **Stage 5** by the Joint Education and Social Work Directorates.

5 CONSIDERATION OF INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 5.1 The guidance considers the impact of exclusion on learners who are especially vulnerable and at risk, including those who are looked after by the authority, those with additional support needs including social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and those on the Child Protection Register or for whom there are related concerns.
- 5.2 The revised guidance acknowledges the role of the Council as corporate parent and the need for the involvement of a child or young person's lead professional in the prevention or management of an exclusion.
- 5.3 If an exclusion is being considered, the following set of core questions should be addressed:
- what interventions have already been effected?
 - is exclusion a last resort?
 - what will exclusion achieve, and would an alternative be more successful?
 - what is the likely impact upon the young person, and their wider circumstances?
 - does the learner require adult or peer support?
 - what are the views of the lead professional?
 - what will the impact be on a foster placement?
 - what impact will this have on planning mechanisms in place such as the Child's Plan?

6 DECISION-MAKING, MANAGING EXCLUSIONS AND RE-ENGAGEMENT

- 6.1 It is recognised that the decision to exclude any learner is a difficult one that should never be taken lightly. The guidance, therefore, aims to support head teachers in making such decisions by ensuring that they are acting within the law and are following due process and related procedures.
- 6.2 The guidance considers alternatives to exclusion as well as specific exclusion procedures including *recording, communication, right of appeal, duration and timing, provision of alternative education, and re-engagement of the learner.*

7 OVERVIEW OF KEY CHANGES INTRODUCED BY THE NEW NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 7.1 The main changes arising from the revised national guidance are that:
- alternative provision must be made for a learner within 3 days of exclusion and not 10 days as previously
 - arrangements to send pupils home for periods of time to 'cool down' must be formally recorded as exclusions
 - the decision to exclude a pupil who is 'looked after' should be taken in consultation with the child's social worker/lead professional
 - time absent from school, for example, due to part-time provision, must be recorded as an exclusion.
- 7.2 Standard letters for use by Angus head teachers to communicate an exclusion to a young person/parent/carer have been amended to reflect the above changes. The local guidance also includes a suggested format for a plan to support the learner's successful re-integration back to school, following a period of exclusion.

8 REPORTING

- 8.1 While national statistics on attendance, absence and exclusion will now be published every two years, analysis and reporting of Angus data will be carried out and disseminated to Head teachers termly. An annual report will be submitted to the Education Committee.
- 8.2 It should be noted that school exclusion statistics for session 2010-2011 are the subject of a separate report at this committee cycle.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising from the consideration of this report.

10 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from the consideration of this report.

11 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

12 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

- 12.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2011-2014:

- our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- individuals and families are involved in decisions which affect them
- we have improved the health and wellbeing of our people and inequalities are reduced

13 CONSULTATION

- 13.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report

**NEIL LOGUE
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.