



**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN
SIAR**

Roinn an Fhoghlaim
Department of Education

Ag Amas air Adhartas - Aiming for Advancement

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

April 2004

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STRATEGY

Rationale

The rationale for a coherent policy framework is embedded in the Education Department's prime focus on "Aiming for Advancement". The guiding principles underlying this focus can be found in the context of national initiatives in Scottish education, all of which are aimed broadly at improving the educational experience of pupils and raising attainment among pupils.

A coherent policy framework will contribute to the realisation of the aims of these initiatives, by articulating an agreed authority position on a range of issues. This in turn will assist schools in devising policy statements to suit their own needs, within the parameters of the authority position.

Policy Development Sub-group

A policy development sub-group will operate, as a sub-set of QILT, to oversee the development, monitoring and evaluation of policies of direct relevance to the curriculum. This sub-group will report regularly to QILT, as part of the departmental consultation process.

Progressing of identified policy areas.

Lead Officers will be identified for each development area. These lead officers will select a working group, in consultation with the Head of Service. Working groups will mainly be selected from departmental staff and school staff. Pupil and parent representation may be appropriate, although care must be taken to keep to a minimum the time pupils spend out of school. Working groups will co-ordinate the drafting of policy statements, which will be issued for consultation in accordance with the Department's consultation policy.

As part of forward planning in terms of the development timeline, school staff will be invited to indicate interest/expertise regarding involvement in working groups or in the provision of feedback on draft documents.

ICT should be used extensively in the production phase of policy statements. E-discussion groups and video-conferencing are particularly to be commended.

The statements produced will reflect best practice as identified locally and nationally. Working groups can consider commissioning practitioners to draft initial documents. This latter route is dependent on availability of funding.

The progress of working groups will be monitored by the Policy Development Sub-group, using an agreed format. The work of groups is also likely to be subject to an focused audit of progress by the Performance Planning and Monitoring group, in terms of the targets identified in the Business Plan for any particular year.

A bidding system will operate to allow for the allocation of funding for policy development from the Flexible Curriculum Development Budget. Bids will be submitted to the appropriate Head of Service, using the agreed format.

Policy statements should be succinct, and should use the agreed format for the Department. They should contain:

- Departmental vision, values and aims.
- A rationale incorporating national priorities and local improvement objectives
- The context for the policy
- Guiding Principles.
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Although it is helpful if policies conform to a particular format, it is recognised that there may be occasions when some additional elements will be appropriate.

Documents produced should include a separate section incorporating:

- Procedures
- Implementation strategies
- Evaluation strategies.

The bilingual dimension should be integral to all statements.

Policy statements will be presented to the Education Committee for adoption as the authority position.

Consultation

Consultation with all interested parties should be carried out, in line with the Departmental Consultation Policy.

The teaching staff and school board consultation focus groups set up by the Department should always be consulted. Consultation documents should be posted on the Education department website, and interested parties should be informed of their availability on the website, and invited to comment.

The Policy Development Sub-group will undertake to inform all teaching staff of the timeline for policy development and will invite staff to express interest in participating in the process of development and consultation. Depending on the level of response, this will allow the department to build up a database of volunteer staff with interest and expertise in particular areas.

Promotion

When the final versions of documents are complete, following the agreed consultation, the Department will undertake promotion of these.

Head teacher meetings` and School Board consultation meetings can be used for an initial launch, after which the following will operate:

- Inclusion on the Comhairle website,
- Distribution to all staff.
- A promotional flyer informing staff of the availability of the policy.
- Reference to documents in newsletters to all staff, following distribution.
- Training events for staff as appropriate.
- QIOs to ensure that schools incorporate these within development planning.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 1 Implementation in Schools

The progress of implementation in schools will be the responsibility of link officers, working within their nominated schools. Link Officers should ensure that the implementation of policies is featured in school development plans, in the short or medium term. A timeline monitoring form for this purpose is attached as Appendix 6.

Prior to launching the final documents, schools will be made aware of the authority's programme of policy development, and as such should be planning incorporation in development plans in advance of receipt of the final documents.

Schools will have the opportunity to evaluate policy documents. This would generally be done two years after the launch of the policy, and will be the responsibility of the lead officer for that particular area of policy.

2 Review and development - departmental

It should not be assumed that policy statements have an indefinite shelf-life. Lead officers are expected to keep abreast of developments nationally within their own area of curricular responsibility, and to inform the Policy Development Sub-group of the need for any review.

Lead officers will also take cognisance of any evaluation comments that may necessitate changes in the authority statement. The Policy Development Sub-group will be informed of the proposed timescale for review.

3. Assessing Impact

Heads of Service and Link Officers will be concerned with assessing the impact of authority policies in schools. Such assessment will have regard to the following criteria:

- The extent of implementation and application of policies in schools.
- Evidence of awareness of policies among staff.
- Evidence of the impact of policies on pupil experience.

Timeline

The Policy development Sub-group will produce a 3-year timeline for policy review, development and monitoring. This will be updated annually at the time of preparation of the Business plan.

If a current policy requires review, this could be completed within a one-year timeframe. Development of new policy statements may best be undertaken over the course of two years.

As a general principle, monitoring and evaluation will take place over the two years following the availability of policy statements in schools.

Appendix 1

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

_____ WORKING GROUP

The _____ Working Group will progress the formulation of the Education department policy/authority statement on all matters relating to _____.

Membership:

_____ ETC

Circulation of Minutes Membership
Policy Development Sub Group

Remit

The Working Group will

- take account of national guidance and current best practice in compiling / updating the Education department policy/statement
- ensure that a wide range of stakeholders are consulted

The policy/statement produced will:

- conform to the Departmental format.
- give the authority position on the area being addressed
- Include implementation strategies for department and school level
- Include monitoring, evaluation and review strategies.
- Contribute to the delivery of national priorities

:

Policy Development : Monitoring Form

Policy Development Area	
Working Group	
Current Progress	
Future development	

Monitoring Date _____

- Forms to be submitted on: 30 June
- 30 September
- 31 December
- 31 March

Appendix 3

Funding Bid – Policy development

Development Area	Rationale for funding	Sum requested

Lead officer

Date.....



Summary and Action Record

The record should be completed by the officer within 2 days of the school visit. A copy of the record should be e-mailed to the school for filing. If the school does not agree with the content of the record, amendments should be agreed with the officer, so that an amended version can be issued..

School		Officer		Date		Duration	
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Nature of Visit	Link Officer/ school support/ or other description
Purpose of visit	

	SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION	ACTION AGREED	BY WHOM	PROGRESS
1				
2				
3				
4				

Policy Development - Timeline Monitoring**Appendix 5****School Implementation**

Link Officers should note the progress of the development of school policies in relation to the authority timeline for monitoring the implementation of policies. Returns should be submitted to C Dunn by 31 May.

School	Policy	Current position	Planning