



POLICY ON PROMOTING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOUR

Report by Chief Officer for Education and Children's Services

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to inform the Comhairle of the development of a new policy on Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour, to give a brief overview of the national context within which this policy has been developed and to seek approval for adoption of the policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 It was recognised that current Comhairle policies on relationships and behaviour were significantly out-of-date, having been published in 2005, and were requiring significant review to bring them into line with current legislation, national policy and latest understanding of best practice. Positive relationships in schools between learners and between staff and learners are key to promoting positive behaviour.
- 2.2 This policy has been developed by Education and Children's Services staff as part of a working group, including ASN Managers, Principal Teachers of Learning Support, and Educational Psychologists. After reviewing existing policies, the group considered the legislative framework, latest Scottish Government Policy and Education Scotland guidance in the making of the new policy.
- 2.3 Following completion of the draft policy, a broad consultation has taken place with pupils, parents, school staff and stakeholders using focus groups and questionnaires. The findings of the consultation have informed the content of the policy and will further inform how it is implemented.
- 2.4 Upon approval, this new policy will replace all existing Comhairle Education and Children's Services behaviour policies other than the existing Anti-Bullying Policy (2016) and Management of Exclusion Policy (2020), both of which remain current and separate, but related, policy areas.
- 2.5 After the policy is approved and adopted by the Comhairle, the working group will develop an implementation plan that will include operational guidance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle approve the Positive Relationship and Behaviour Policy.**

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Appendix:	Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy (2024)
Background Papers:	Reference list of papers provided within the policy document.

IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	The development of the policy takes into account duties upon the education authority in respect of the: Education (Scotland) Act 1980; Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000; Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Acts 2004 & 2009; Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (as amended 2016); and the The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024.
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	The adoption of the policy does not impact on any identified strategic risks. It provides a reduction in operational risks through the adoption of compliant practice across Comhairle settings.
Equalities	This policy promotes inclusion and approaches that are effective for children who have had adverse childhood experiences. It recognises children's rights under the UNCRC. An evaluation of the need for Equality Impact Assessment will be considered by the group.
Corporate Strategy	Support Children, Families and Young People: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure schools and lifelong learning are at the heart of our communities, with particular emphasis on Gàidhlig, digital skills and new technologies. Support Caring and Resilient Communities and Quality of Life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nurture the safety and resilience of our communities.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	The policy has been subject to broad consultation, as detailed in the report.

BACKGROUND

5.1 Education Scotland has clear guidance on promoting positive relationships and behaviour in schools and early years settings. This guidance is based on evidence that positive relationships in schools between learners and between staff and learners are key to promoting positive behaviour.

- 5.2 Within Education and Children's Services in the Comhairle there is a shared understanding that positive relationships in which people endeavour to treat each other with respect are essential for modelling and teaching positive behaviour to children and young people.
- 5.3 This policy has been developed by Education and Children's Services staff following identification that existing policies were significantly out-of-date and no longer compliant. A major review and development was required to bring our policy into line with current legislation, national policy and latest understanding of best practice across the nation.
- 5.4 A working group was established to take forward this work that included ASN Managers, Principal Teachers of Learning Support, and Educational Psychologists under the guidance of the Chief Officer.

DETAIL

- 6.1 In the Developing a positive whole school ethos and culture: Relationships, Learning and Behaviour Scottish Government (2018) it is stated that :
'A positive school ethos and culture (sometimes described in research as 'climate') is essential to developing good relationships and positive behaviour in the classroom, playground and wider community.'

One of the priority actions is for: *'All local authorities and schools have a relationships and behaviour policy'*
- 6.2 Education Scotland (2023) have produced guidance on promoting positive relationships and behaviour in educational settings. This has been referred to in the development of the proposed Comhairle Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy. The policy also reflects all the latest legislation pertinent to this area, as detailed in the policy document.
- 6.3 Following completion of the draft policy, a broad consultation was planned and conducted that involved school staff, children, parents and other professionals. Consultation with children and young people of school age was done using focus groups led by school staff. Other views were gathered through the use of online surveys.
- 6.4 76% of school staff and 60% of parents reported that this policy contained suitable, useful and practical information that supported their understanding of a relationship-based approach, while 9% of staff and 13% of parents didn't agree with this statement. Amendments were made to the policy following the consultation to clarify how it is intended to be used. Some school staff requested more information on implementation, this will be included in the implementation plan.
- 6.5 Following a review of the consultation responses, minor amendments and additions were made to the policy document ahead of preparing for final publication.
- 6.6 It is the expectation that, once this policy is adopted by the Comhairle, schools will use it as the basis and reference point for development of their own individual Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour policies that reflect their culture, systems and procedures in their setting. The Comhairle policy will continue to act as the authority's umbrella policy for this area.

CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Comhairle Promoting Positive Relationships and Behaviour in Schools policy has been developed to support current best practice in our educational establishments with regard to promoting positive relationships and behaviour.
- 7.2 Education and Children's Services officers recommend that the Comhairle agree to adopt this policy.