

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT

To: Education Committee	Subject: Managing Challenging Behaviour
From: Director of Education	
Date: April 2001	
Ref: DS/KM	

Purpose of Report

The purposes of this paper are to inform members of the progress being made in relation to alternatives to exclusion from school and to obtain approval for the establishment of a departmental strategic group on school discipline.

Recommendations

The education committee is asked:

- (i) to note the contents of this report
- (ii) to approve the establishment of a strategic working group on discipline to advise the director of education on appropriate policy and action in the area of school discipline.

Michael O'Neill

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NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL : DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Report by Director

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purposes of this paper are to inform members of the progress being made in relation to alternatives to exclusion from school and to obtain approval for the establishment of a departmental strategic group on school discipline.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The management of exclusions from schools is conducted within a guidance framework which includes:
- (i) SOEID Circular 2/98 which provides guidance to schools and local authorities on the exclusion process and related policy matters
 - (ii) the education department's Standard Circular 8 which incorporates the above guidance.
- 2.2 Through the Excellence Fund for Schools Core Programme, the education department has been working towards the government's target of reducing exclusion by 30% by 2002, as compared to the 1999 figures. This funding has allowed additional staff to be deployed to schools, and has enabled a variety of other approaches to be supported. The New Community Schools initiative assumes as one of its principles that the schools receiving additional funding will work towards reducing exclusions towards 0%.

3. CURRENT POSITION

Current Strategies for Managing Challenging Behaviour

- 3.1 A range of strategies, programmes and provision helps to ensure that the authority is able to address challenging behaviour in a flexible, focused yet graduated manner. This spectrum of support is outlined in Appendix 1. In addition the authority is proposing significant changes to the structure and balance of the secondary curriculum which will introduce greater flexibility, innovation and pupil choice and enable schools to make provision which is more appropriate to the needs of all young people. A range of innovative curricular strategies is currently being piloted in a number of North Lanarkshire schools and new initiatives such as Skill Force are currently being planned. In this way it is hoped that schools will be enabled to address the feelings of alienation and disaffection evident in the attitude of some young people to the curriculum. The director of education proposes to table a paper outlining his proposals for the secondary curriculum at the next meeting of the education committee.

Exclusion Data

- 3.2 In spite of the resources deployed and the highly commendable efforts made by individual teachers, ancillary staff and headteachers in our school in managing challenging behaviour, exclusion rates in North Lanarkshire in the secondary and special school sectors are increasing, as the table below indicates:

Exclusion Rate - Half Days per pupil	1998–1999	1999–2000	2000–2001 (26/04)
Special	1.1	1.5	1.6
Primary	0.1	0.1	0.1
Secondary	1.1	1.1	1.3

It has been difficult to measure the direction of exclusion trends nationally because of changes in the collection and presentation of statistics by the Scottish Executive.

- 3.3 In primary schools the number of exclusions is stable, small and below the national average. These tend to be very specific in relation to the needs and difficulties of individual children. In consequence, it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from trends.
- 3.4 In special and secondary schools the volume of inclusions is higher and shows an increase over the last 3 years. **An** examination of the reasons for exclusion (Appendix B) shows that general or persistent disobedience is the main reason for exclusions from secondary schools whilst in the special educational needs sector physical abuse of members of staff has become the main reason. It should be noted that, whilst the general trend in secondary and special schools is upward, some schools have reduced their exclusions significantly while others are still developing approaches.
- 3.5 A comparison of the combined exclusion rates for 1999-2000 for the education authorities in our comparative cluster shows the following picture:

North Lanarkshire	53.5
Inverclyde	54.2
Renfrewshire	58.5
West Dunbartonshire	62.5
Dundee	93.3
Glasgow	101.50
National	42.6

4. CHANGES IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The Standard in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 imposes a duty on authorities to ensure that any young person who is excluded from schools is able to continue to benefit from education. Guidance from the Scottish Executive on this section of the new act is still awaited. However, indications are that a child who has been excluded should be in receipt of provision that is equivalent to their mainstream schools. Section 40 of the Act places a requirement on the authority to provide school education to excludees in either 'a school managed by them' or in a school where 'the

managers are willing to receive him'. It is to be noted however that the guidance to section 15 of the Act encourages local authorities to include pupils attending specialised behavioural provision when updating their policies to take account of the new mainstreaming expectations included in the Act. These duties obviously have significant implications both for practice and resourcing. A number of issues related to this development in the law will require some further consideration by the Authority.

5. THE WAY FORWARD

- 5.1 Work has commenced on revising standard circular 8 on exclusions to take account of section 41 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 that gives children 'of sufficient age and maturity' the right to appeal their own exclusion.
- 5.2 Schools have been surveyed to identify the range of alternatives to exclusion initiatives being implemented in schools. The authority proposes to evaluate these initiatives with a view to highlighting and disseminating those initiatives which have proven successful in addressing challenging behaviour.
- 5.3 The education department will continue to work with the departments of community services and social work to develop joint initiatives, particularly to develop flexible, work & college based packages for older secondary pupils in line with the recommendations of the Beattie Committee.
- 5.4 There is a need to review all aspects of the authority's approach to Alternatives to Exclusion with a view to ensuring strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of Alternatives to Exclusion initiatives in relation to the relevant resources available to the Authority:
 - Excellence Fund Core Programme – Alternatives to Exclusion
 - NLC Social Inclusion Resources
 - Social Work Resources

It is proposed that this is taken forward within a wider strategic review of Discipline within the authority's schools and that a departmental strategic group be established to take this forward. Comprising senior staff representatives from secondary schools primary schools and SEN and colleagues from psychological services, the professional associations, and the departments of Community Services and Social Work, this group will be charged with reviewing and making recommendations for policy making and action in the area of school discipline. It will be a requirement that the group will consult with pupils and parents across the authority in the course of their work, and that it will have regard to any advice emanating from the recently formed Ministerial Task Group on Discipline.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The education committee is asked:
 - (ii) to note the contents of this report
 - (iii) to approve the establishment of a strategic working group on discipline to advise the director of education on appropriate policy and action in the area of school discipline.

Michael J'Neil

Appendix 1

North Lanarkshire Council : Department of Education

Managing Challenging Behaviour

1. A very wide range of resources is currently deployed in supporting young people who present challenging behaviour within authority schools and reducing the levels of disruption from schools and exclusion from education.

2. Mainstream schools

All schools have internal discipline and support systems. At secondary stage these operate through the guidance, support for learning and school management teams.

All schools take a graduated approach to tackling challenging behaviour. As a last resort exclusion is only considered when other attempts to improve the difficulties have failed.

3. Core support services

The authority provides a range of external resources to schools. All schools receive support from the authority's Network Support Teams and Psychological Service. All schools are also able to access behaviour support teachers from either the Primary or Secondary Support Teams.

Most secondary schools have a link to their social work area team and many have allocated social work support staff and group work in school. Many secondary schools also have workers from the Community Service department attached to the school. Most secondary schools have a Joint Agency Team (JAT) that coordinates and plans interagency support for vulnerable young people.

4. Initiatives

North Lanarkshire schools in conjunction with the QDS, Psychological Service and Network Support are developing innovative initiatives to improve the standards of behaviour and discipline. Many projects have been developed by schools from within existing staffing and resources to promote positive behaviour:

- "Circle Time", a structured approach to allow pupils to discuss behaviour and resolve difficulties
- Anger management groups, teaching pupils to control and reduce outbursts of anger
- Buddy Systems, pairing pupils with older more mature partners to offer advice and support.
- Playground games development
 - xl Clubs
 - Raising self esteem in boys
 - Activities clubs

5. Authority resourced initiatives

In addition to the above, the authority is piloting a wide number of new approaches to supporting schools, including initiatives funded through the Scottish executive's New Community Schools", "Education Action Plan" schools and 'Alternatives to Exclusion' projects.

North Lanarkshire's Alternative to Exclusion initiatives are aimed at meeting the needs of pupils with challenging behaviour and thereby reducing exclusion from education. These include:

- additional staffing for all secondary schools to support the functioning of JAT's
- additional careers service support to four secondary schools using the 'OnTrack' programme
- the funding of additional community education workers for partnership projects in mainstream schools
- piloting of educational software within SEBD provision
- funding a variety of individual small-scale initiatives suggested by head teachers in both primary and secondary schools
- the expansion of SEBD provision at primary stage

6. Support bases attached to mainstream schools

As part of the Alternatives to Exclusion pilot scheme, the committee agreed to fund support bases in two authority schools. In addition, match funding from the Alternatives to Exclusion budget has allowed a number of schools within the authority to take forward their own initiatives. A significant feature of secondary school initiatives has been the development of within school support bases. These support bases serve a variety of purposes ranging from "time out" to curriculum reinforcement.

7. Specialised schools and Units

A number of children and young people in North Lanarkshire are unable to have their needs met within mainstream schools and are educated in off-site provision. This provision offers an excellent resource to some of the most vulnerable pupils and prevents further experiences of both exclusion from education and social exclusion. A brief summary of this provision follows, sequenced in order of increasing segregation from mainstream provision:

a. Assessment Centres and Young Person Support Units.

These are inter-departmental provision, social work managed but with education funded teachers. These units support vulnerable young people usually in the unit but sometimes in their mainstream school. The young people involved remain attached to their school. There are 4 such units:

- Kirkknowe Assessment Centre
- Airdrie (Waverley) YPSU
- Coatbridge (Bonnyhill) YPSU
- Kilsyth YPSU

b. Units where pupils remain on their referring schools roll but are predominantly educated within the unit.

There are at present 3 such facilities:

- Rosehall Unit
Education department unit
- Viewpark Young Persons Support Centre (YPSU)
Joint provision Social Work managed
- The Seven Day Centre
Joint provision Social Work managed

The authority is continually improving the quality of this provision and from August 2001 three of the above units, Viewpark, Kirkknowe and Rosehall, will be refocused into two new interdepartmental centres, able to provide an integrated social care and education package.

c Special Schools for Social Emotional & Behavioural difficulties (SEBD)

The authority currently has 5 such schools

- Pentland School, for pupils of primary age
 - Willowbank main school
 - Willowbank annex
(Viewpark Support Centre)
 - Fallside -
 - Portland -
- } all for secondary age pupils

d Independent Day Schools

In addition to the above the authority purchases a number of day school placements from independent schools. These are usually day placements at residential schools close to the authority:

- St Francis Springboig, males aged 14 plus
- St Francis Plains, males aged 12 plus
- St Francis Bishopton, females aged 12 plus
- other independent day schools are used as the need arises.

8. Residential schools and units

The decision to place a young person in a residential school away from his community and family is an extremely serious one and is taken only where it is in the best interests of that young person. In North Lanarkshire all such decisions are taken jointly by education and social work and all residential school placements are jointly funded.

Within these schools and units there is a wide range of approaches supporting these young people. This continuum of provision is able to provide a suitable, individual programme for children whose needs range from very young children with severe interpersonal and emotional difficulties to adolescents who present high levels of disaffection and challenging behaviour, requiring supervision and monitoring. The cost of residential schooling varies but is very expensive.

At any time approximately 30 young people are in residential schools or assessment centres due to behavioural problems. The range of residential schools includes, Rowanlee Assessment Centre (Newfield), a variety of residential Schools SEBD and Secure Unit Placements.

EXCLUSIONS BY CIRCUMSTANCE (BY SECTOR)

Secondary Exclusions by Circumstance	98-99	99-00	00_01
Fighting	7.7%	9.6%	8.7%
Physical Abuse of Fellow Pupils	11.9%	11.7%	11.8%
Physical Abuse of Members of Staff	1.8%	2.4%	2.3%
Verbal Abuse of Fellow Pupils	1.0%	0.9%	0.8%
Verbal Abuse of Members of Staff	12.0%	12.5%	13.3%
Aggressive or threatening behaviour	10.4%	10.8%	9.3%
General or persistent disobedience	22.7%	22.8%	22.0%
Insolent or offensive behaviour	11.5%	8.1%	8.3%
Drug related incident	1.7%	1.0%	1.8%
Racist incident	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Other	19.0%	20.0%	21.8%

Rates are expressed as a percentage of all exclusions (half days lost) in this sector

Primary Exclusions by Circumstance	98-99	99-00	00_01
Fighting	7.8%	6.0%	6.4%
Physical Abuse of Fellow Pupils	18.5%	19.1%	21.3%
Physical Abuse of Members of Staff	12.6%	7.9%	10.4%
Verbal Abuse of Fellow Pupils	0.6%	1.2%	1.2%
Verbal Abuse of Members of Staff	9.7%	12.9%	14.6%
Aggressive or threatening behaviour	11.9%	15.2%	9.4%
General or persistent disobedience	10.2%	11.5%	18.8%
Insolent or offensive behaviour	11.1%	15.7%	13.9%
Drug related incident	2.6%	2.3%	0.0%
Racist incident	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
Other	15.1%	7.9%	4.0%

Rates are expressed as a percentage of all exclusions (half days lost) in this sector

Special Schools Exclusions by Circumstance	98_99	99_00	00_01
Fighting	0.8%	1.9%	0.0%
Physical Abuse of Fellow Pupils	9.6%	17.5%	16.4%
Physical Abuse of Members of Staff	15.1%	22.8%	38.6%
Verbal Abuse of Fellow Pupils	0.0%	1.5%	1.3%
Verbal Abuse of Members of Staff	12.1%	13.6%	5.9%
Aggressive or threatening behaviour	22.2%	25.0%	18.7%
General or persistent disobedience	15.1%	2.8%	6.9%
Insolent or offensive behaviour	10.9%	14.3%	1.7%
Drug related incident	3.5%	0.6%	0.0%
Racist incident	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	10.7%	0.0%	10.7%

Rates are expressed as a percentage of all exclusions (half days lost) in this sector

The 'Other' category will include such incidents as vandalism (buildings, graffiti, staff cars etc), carrying a concealed weapon, drunkenness, lack of parental co-operation, Internet abuse, tampering with computers and computer files, refusal to accept school punishments, covering up for another pupil in a serious incident, inciting others to break the rules, bullying (combination of physical and verbal abuse) etc.