
CONSULTATION ON INCLUSION STRATEGY AND POLICY

Report by Service Director Children & Young People EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

19 June 2018

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 The following National Legislation and Guidance have recently been published which outline the vision and underlying principles of inclusion:

- **Included, Engaged, and Involved (Part 2) A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2017)**
- **Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour (2013)**
- **Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)**
- **National Improvement Framework (2016)**
- **Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People Strategy (2015 – 2020)**

Scottish Borders Council's Inclusion Strategy(Appendix 1) and Inclusion Policy(Appendix 2) for learning settings aim to reflect this guidance and provide a clear strategic direction for schools and early years settings.

- 1.2** Scottish Borders Council has a clear commitment to ensuring children and young people are 'in our sight, in our minds, in our actions and are being heard' as part of the Council's vision to raise attainment and achievement for all learners whilst ensuring full participation and inclusion. The Inclusion Strategy and Policy provide the Council with the opportunity to build on the developing inclusive culture in learning establishments and to seek to ensure we build an inclusive education system.
- 1.3** The Council is fully committed to involving all stakeholders in policy and strategic developments. The draft documents contained within this report i.e. the Inclusion Strategy and Policy (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2) will go out to consultation for a period of time and extensive engagement will take place to ensure this commitment is fully realised. The policy will then be brought back to the Executive in December 2018 with stakeholders' views reported upon and incorporated within the strategy and policy as appropriate.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:-

- (a) Agree an initial consultation period for the Inclusion Strategy and Inclusion Policy commencing August 2018 to October 2018.**
- (b) Agree that the final draft of the Inclusion Strategy and Inclusion Policy are brought back to the Executive in December 2018 for approval.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scottish Borders Council has a persistent focus on improving inclusive practice across learning settings. This can be evidenced over the last two years by the following:
- a) 31% reduction in pupils in external placements (72 down to 50)
 - b) A review of home education with a view to reduce the number of pupils being educated solely at home and an increase in more flexible learning options
 - c) A significant reduction of instances of exclusion in all schools
 - d) Development of an Inclusion and Wellbeing Service including the appointment of a Head Teacher
- 3.2 There has been a significant investment in terms of infrastructure, capacity and culture to improve inclusive practice across learning settings. This has been evidenced by extensive capital investment in improving learning settings for children with additional support needs: the opening of the new Leader Valley School, the new Langlee Support Centre, the new primary Support Centre in the new Duns Primary School and a refurbished and upgraded Galashiels Secondary Support Centre. There is also a commitment to a fully inclusive learning journey for pupils with additional support needs from 2 years into adulthood in the new Jedburgh intergenerational learning campus.
- 3.3 This strategy and policy aims to provide a framework which supports Scottish Borders Council to implement the national guidance and legislation for inclusion in educational settings whilst building upon the inclusive practice that has been a focus for development in recent years. Both documents continue from the previous work to further develop and embed inclusion in Scottish Borders Council's learning settings.

4 CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 4.1 The Council propose to consult a range of stakeholders in order to ensure that the following aspects of the Inclusion Strategy and Policy are reliable, relevant and valid. The aspects for consultation are:
- a) The guiding principles within the Inclusion Strategy
 - b) The success criteria (indicators) for practice standards in the Inclusion Strategy and possible target setting approaches
 - c) A 3 year training programme for all staff to support inclusion
 - d) All key elements within the Inclusion Policy except those covered by statute and national legislation
- 4.2 The key stakeholders for this consultation will be: children and young people, parents and carers, allied health professionals, third sector, key partners and Council staff.

- 4.3 The methods of consultation will include:
- a) Online surveys
 - b) Attendance at parent groups eg Meeting of Minds and BANG
 - c) 1-2-1 meetings with individual parents
 - d) Wider partnership forums (e.g. allied health professionals, learning communities)
 - e) School based events (specific for pupils)
 - f) Engagement with head teachers, teachers and wider staff

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The consultation on the Inclusion Strategy and Inclusion Policy will take place between August and October 2018.

The final Inclusion Strategy and Policy will be presented to the Executive Committee in December 2018. These will have been amended and developed based on the information gathered during consultation.

This strategy will be supported by a range of guidance and resources which will further enhance the educational experience of young people in Council learning settings. The Council's approach will ensure that all young people living in Scottish Borders experience an inclusive education. The Council will work together to ensure that all children and young people develop a sense of self-worth, a sense of belonging and a self-confidence to achieve.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

The Council must consider new national documentation and ensure that Council policy and guidance takes account of all national advice, guidance and statute. The officers have worked with a group of partners to produce a draft Inclusion Strategy and Policy which will now be fully consulted upon before it is finalised. The consultation process will provide an opportunity to fully assess and mitigate any potential risks to practice.

6.3 Equalities

- (a) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.
- (b) It is anticipated that there are no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no significant impacts on the economy, community or environment arising from the proposals contained in this report.

6.5 Carbon Management

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report.

6.6 Rural Proofing

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Donna Manson

Service Director Children & Young People

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Christian Robertson	Senior Lead Officer, Education

Background Papers:

Scottish Government papers:

Included, Engaged and Involved (Part 2) –A Positive Approach to preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2017),

Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour (2013)

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)

National Improvement Framework (2016)

Getting it Right for Looked after Children and Young People Strategy (2015-2020)

Previous Minute Reference: N/A

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Donna Manson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at: Donna Manson, Donna.Manson@scotborders.gcsx.gov.uk , 01835 826742