

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 26 NOVEMBER 2007

REPORT ON: SUPPORTING LEARNING IN DUNDEE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 596-2007

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek Committee approval for the Education Department's revised Policy on Supporting Learning in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this report and accepts the revised Policy on Supporting Learning in Dundee attached as an appendix to this Report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Support for Learning in the city has been an enduring strength for the Authority and within individual schools as attested by the 2006 INEA2 inspection of the education functions of this authority and in the majority of school HMIe inspection reports.

4.2 Recent legislation and changes in the Department's management structure have provided the impetus to re-draft existing practices and procedures and guidelines under the umbrella of a single brief policy statement underpinned by detailed operational guidance.

4.3 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 finally comes fully into force in November 2007. This piece of legislation marked a significant shift in national policy ending the Records of Needs system, ending the legal status of the phrase 'special educational needs' and introducing the far broader concept of additional support needs. The introduction of the Act and its accompanying Code of Practice signalled a change to the duties of local authorities with respect to (i) identifying and supporting children with additional support needs, (ii) greater emphasis on partnership working to support children and young people, (iii) requirements to publish and make available information, and (iv) co-ordinating planning to address barriers to learning.

4.4 The recent re-structuring at management level has seen a new team established to ensure that the complex and varied duties and tasks associated with supporting learning can be appropriately addressed and that full compliance with the legislative framework within which supported learning is delivered. This team has taken immediate responsibility for reviewing and revising, where necessary, all existing policies and procedures associated with support for learning.

4.4 This policy is based on the preparatory work of the Additional Support Act Dundee Implementation Group (ASADIG), a multi-agency planning partnership, which has seen the Education Department recognised by HMIe as exemplifying good practice on a national level. The ASADIG partners have provided individual agency and joint agency training and documentation to support the implementation of the 2004 Act.

4.5 As indicated above, the policy will be underpinned by detailed operational guidelines encompassing a wide range of related issues as listed alphabetically below. The appendices to the policy will also provide references to legislation, other national policies and reports as well as to other relevant Council policies and procedures.

- Additional support needs/ASL Act
- Attending meetings
- Awareness-raising
- Centrally-deployed support
- Children of Gypsy and Traveller families
- Communication and consultation

- Complaints procedure
- Dispute resolution
- Education of pupils absent from school with long-term illness
- Evaluation
- Looked after children
- Minimum effective intervention
- Models of operation - The Inclusive School
- Monitoring
- More able children and young people
- Offsite education/additional resources
- Options process
- Partner agencies
- Placing requests
- Planning to support learning Personal Learning Planning
 Summary of Planned Intervention
 Individualised Educational Programme
 Co-ordinated Support Plan
- Referral to residential school
- Review
- School-based support
- Special assessment arrangements
- Specialised provision (Kingspark School, Frances Wright Pre-School Centre, schools with enhanced levels of provision)
- Stages of assessment and intervention
- Therapy services
- Timelines
- Training
- Transitions
- Transport

4.6 All of the above content has been drafted and will be provided along with the Policy. In addition to it being provided to schools and partner agencies as hard copy, it will be available on the Council's website to ensure that it can be consulted at any time by any parent or child who has access to the internet.

4.7 This Policy will promote the Education Department's desire and duty to provide support for all children including those with additional support needs.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

5.2 The Policy on Supporting Learning in Dundee is designed to promote fairness and equality for all. Its implementation will increase participation in society by stating clearly that support is provided at a level and intensity required to address the additional support needs of individual children and young people in Dundee. The policy sets out the terms under which support will be provided to enhance the personal learning capacity of children. The policy is designed to promote the inclusion of each pupil in the most appropriate supportive educational and social environment and ensure that, as far as is possible and reasonable, they receive the support they require to try to eliminate barriers to their learning.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head of Finance, Trade Unions, School Staff and Parent Representatives from all schools and nurseries in the city have been consulted.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

SUPPORTING LEARNING POLICY

1.1 PURPOSE

- 1.1.1 This policy is designed to promote the development and maintenance of an inclusive service, developing the capacity in all school settings, promoting best practice and supporting the learning of all pupils.
- 1.1.2 This policy is linked directly to the Learning Together in Dundee strategy. It is based on the fact that pupils perform better when they know what it is they have to learn, are aware of different approaches to learning, and have clear, agreed targets.
- 1.1.3 This policy and the accompanying procedures have been produced to enable all staff working with children and young people who have additional support needs to devise and deliver effective education.
- 1.1.4 Identified needs will be addressed through providing effective support to enable pupils to develop the 'four capacities' described in 'A Curriculum for Excellence' and become
- successful learners
 - confident individuals
 - responsible citizens and
 - effective contributors

It is our clear aim to work together with children and young people and their families to achieve this.

- 1.1.5 We will make appropriate use of our resources to ensure that all our staff are led effectively, demonstrate positive values, are well-trained and motivated to effectively support all children.
- 1.1.6 The policy aims to promote collaborative multi-agency responses and working practices.

1.2 WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

1.2.1 ACHIEVEMENT

Dundee City Council is committed to supporting learning for all pupils including those who have additional needs to enable them to experience a sense of belonging, develop specific skills and abilities, confidence and belief in their own learning potential.

We believe in promoting success by recognising and celebrating the diversity of achievement by children and young people across the entire range of educational establishments.

All mainstream schools are resourced and supported to provide additional support for pupils in terms of their intellectual, social and emotional needs.

1.2.2 ETHOS

Learning will be enhanced in appropriately productive and stimulating settings where

- there is a commitment to developing the potential of each individual pupil
- pupils feel safe and are valued
- pupils are actively engaged in their learning process
- staff value and build pupil relationships
- good practice is consistently applied when working with pupils
- there are agreed and understood learning programmes
- staff are engaged in reflective practice and commitment to understanding learning

1.2.3 PARTNERSHIP

All pupils will be regarded as active partners in learning and will be involved appropriate to their age and stage in sharing their views and in developing learning goals.

Effective communication and partnerships with parents is key to securing mutually supportive and positive home-school relationships. All parents should feel listened to and involved as partners in the development of support for learning programmes.

Dundee City Council is committed to working and co-ordinating productive, creative partnerships with all relevant individuals and agencies.

1.3 HOW WE WILL SUPPORT LEARNING

- 1.3.1 A structured system of multi-agency assessment operates and planned, additional support will be provided for children and young people on the basis of balancing the most effective and least intrusive interventions.
- 1.3.2 Dundee City Council remains committed to the benefits of early intervention and the development of whole school approaches to address the range of individual pupil needs.
- 1.3.3 It is expected that all staff will understand their role in sharing information to support learning within and across stages.
- 1.3.4 A variety of planning documents which support learning outcomes are available to co-ordinate interventions. These are collaboratively written, implemented and reviewed.
- 1.3.5 A very small number of pupils may require intensive, highly individualised support which is only available in more specialised settings in Dundee or elsewhere. Such placements require careful consideration and planning and the Educational Department, working with the pupil, parents, partner Departments and agencies, can make arrangements for the pupil to access such provision.

1.4 WHO WILL IMPLEMENT THIS POLICY?

1.4.1 DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & CENTRALLY-BASED STAFF

The Director of Education is responsible for supporting schools in the implementation of this policy by:

- developing detailed Policy Guidelines (see section 2 below) to assist those who work with pupils who have additional support needs in our nurseries and schools

- managing human resources according to agreed staffing levels with particular regard to additional staff assigned to support learning
- maintaining information technology systems that allow schools and others to monitor effectively the impact of their services on pupils' learning
- providing a range of training and development opportunities for all staff
- providing information and promoting access to that information
- advising on the production and use of appropriate support materials and learning programmes
- assisting schools and support services to develop positive collaborative working practices with all partners in the support of learning for all
- providing schools and other centres which are as inviting and attractive as they can be
- developing appropriate resources and information to enable all children and young people to learn in their local community or as nearby as possible
- working with families and other partners to plan, develop and deliver appropriate provision in the most appropriate learning environment possible
- providing an appropriate range of support services and partnership arrangements with other agencies
- ensuring regular reviews of this policy

1.4.2 HEAD TEACHER

The Head Teacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy by:

- developing and promoting, in partnership with all appropriate members of the school community and partner agencies and organisations, an individual school policy on Supporting Learning based on the principles and model promoted within this Authority Policy
- modelling and promoting an inclusive ethos which values all children and young people equally and which recognises and delivers on the need to support some children and young people more intensively than others in the short, medium or long-term
- prioritising staffing in order to provide support for children in particular need and deploying them appropriately to support individuals and groups of pupils on the basis of the staged intervention process
- ensuring that staff have opportunities to develop their skills and abilities and to regularly update their professional knowledge and understanding of relevant issues (such as methodologies, new legislation and national reports)
- ensuring that all staff, all pupils, all parents and the School Board (or its successor organisation) are aware of the Authority and school Supporting Learning Policies
- promoting wide understanding and acceptance of the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community for supporting the learning and protecting the safety of its more vulnerable and needy members
- ensuring that all partners in the process are clear about lines of communication

- ensuring that the both the Authority and the school Supporting Learning Policies and Guidelines are fully implemented and the school's policy is reviewed on a regular basis
- ensuring the provision of appropriate support for individuals and groups of pupils, in partnership with experienced teaching and other colleagues whether they be located in-house, working in outreach programmes, or based centrally in the Education Department and other agencies
- contributing to regular review of the Authority Policy and Guidelines

1.4.3 ALL STAFF

All staff are responsible for the implementation of this policy by:

- planning lessons to meet the needs of all pupils
- working with appropriate persons to support all pupils by
- keeping a record of the work they do
- assessing and reporting on the progress made by each pupil
- noting differences and anomalies
- identifying pupils who need additional support for any reason
- informing appropriate people of things that concern them as they arise
- working co-operatively to develop and promote a supportive and caring environment which values, includes and supports all children and young people
- working collaboratively with colleagues and parents to help identify and address the needs of all children and young people
- sharing experience and good practice of supporting learning with colleagues and being receptive to those of others
- devising, where appropriate, Individualised Educational Programmes (IEP) or Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSP) for pupils with significant additional support needs and, as appropriate
- contributing to consultation on what to include in the IEP and/or CSP
- taking note of the contents of the IEP and/or CSP
- working towards the achievement of the agreed targets and objectives within the IEP and/or CSP
- commenting on the progress of pupils in the context of the IEP and/or CSP

1.4.4 ALL PUPILS

Pupils are responsible for the implementation of this policy by

- accepting appropriate individual responsibility for learning
- demonstrating a readiness to participate positively in lessons and other activities organised by the school or on school premises by partner agencies
- contributing appropriately to supporting children and young people who are more challenged by circumstances over which they may have little or no control

1.5 PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- 1.5.1 In line with the inclusive and collaborative spirit of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, all partners – including Education services - and their representatives, while respecting diverse professional remits and accepting areas of individual expertise and agency responsibility, are encouraged to support implementation of this policy by:
- working with nurseries, schools and offsite centres to ensure that opportunities are provided that will enable all children and young people to develop their full potential
 - assisting the Head Teacher and school staff in promoting both the Authority and school Policies in their work with children, young people, their families and the wider community
 - contributing appropriately to the regular review of this and other relevant policies

1.6 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

- 1.6.1 Dundee City Council is committed to working in partnership with parents. Parents are encouraged to attend collective and individual meetings held in schools. By maintaining this regular contact with their child's school, they will give themselves the best chance to stay involved, informed, consulted and included in both the life of the school community and their child's education.
- 1.6.2 Each parent should have a key school contact and should know who that is (e.g. Guidance Teacher, Support for Learning Teacher, Head Teacher) and how and when to contact them.
- 1.6.3 If a parent has concerns about any aspect of their child's education, they should feel free to contact their key school contact, in the first instance.
- 1.6.4 If after contact with school, a parent has remaining issues that are unresolved, they should contact the Department's Advice and Conciliation Manager [see *Supporting Learning in Dundee - Information for Parents and Young People*].
- 1.6.5 If a parent feels their child's additional support needs are so significant that they require a written plan, they should approach their key school contact in the first instance. The Head Teacher may consult the Co-ordinator (Additional Support Needs) for advice.
- 1.6.6 A parent's key school contact should be able to provide advice on what can be done at home to get the most out of any plan designed to support a child's learning and - vice versa - information provided by the parent will help the school amend, improve and implement a child or young person's educational support plan.
- 1.6.7 Any educational plan needs the support and co-operation of parents to work. Without their help, even the best educational plans will not be fully effective.

1.7 REVIEW

- 1.7.1 This policy will be amended in light of consultation involving all partners and stakeholders.

Publication Date: December 2007

Review Date: August 2010; every three years thereafter

Officer responsible: Head of Support for Learning