REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 28 APRIL 2008

REPORT ON: MANAGING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REPORT NO: 245-2008

1.0   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   This report is to provide Committee with information on the progress of implementing of the Managing Disruptive Behaviour report published in January 2006.

2.0   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   The Committee is recommended to
       (i)   note the content of the report
       (ii)   support the continuation of the Standing Group on Managing Disruptive Behaviour established following the publication of the previous report
       (iii)   refer the report to the Best Value Working Group for its consideration.

3.0   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1   None

4.0   MAIN TEXT

4.1   The Education Committee, at its meeting on 20th February 2006, approved Report No 67-2006) (*Managing Disruptive Behaviour*) which brought forward comprehensive guidelines for dealing with disruptive behaviour in schools, and included a revised policy on exclusion from school and a review of offsite education provision. Report 67-2006 led to the publication and dissemination of the Managing Disruptive Behaviour guidelines in March 2006. Report numbers 731-2001 (*Supporting Pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*), 648-2005 (*Provision of Offsite Education*) and 703-2005 (*Managing Unacceptable Behaviour in Schools*) also refer.

4.2   This authority is committed to maintaining an ethos of safety, protection and security for all the children and young people who learn and all the staff who work in our educational establishments.

4.3   The aims of the Managing Disruptive Behaviour report were to reduce disruption in our schools and to increase the capacity of schools to address seriously challenging behaviour, thereby, reducing potential exclusion of some pupils from full participation in community life. The report was designed to promote the successful inclusion of all pupils in an appropriately supportive educational environment and ensure their personal safety and security as far as it is possible to do so.

4.4   The review of offsite education was completed and resulted in Report No. 542-2007 being approved by Committee in September 2007.

4.5   Following the approval of Report No 67-2006, a Standing group chaired by the Head of Support for Learning took forward the implementation of the action points arising from the published Managing Disruptive Behaviour report (March 2006). The Standing Group has representatives from nursery, primary and secondary Head Teachers, secondary Guidance staff, the Educational Psychology Service, Home School Support Service, Offsite Education, Educational Development Service, Leisure and Communities and Social Work Departments.

4.5   This Report provides an opportunity to reflect on the work that has been carried out within this authority by teachers and support staff, by Head Teachers and by Council Officers to face the challenge posed by disruptive behaviour in our schools.

4.6   The Managing Disruptive Behaviour report is grounded on 7 core principles. These are what underpin all policy development and training in the field of promoting positive behaviour and responding appropriately to incidents of disruptive behaviour. They relate to: Individual Needs,

Equal Opportunity, Inclusion, Partnership, Staff Training and Development, Staged Intervention and finally, Planning and Review.

4.7 We regard all pupils as having equality of opportunity and through our various equality schemes and our policy development try to ensure that we set high expectations of them and provide wide and diverse opportunities for them to achieve. Universal inclusion must – we believe – be the goal for all schools. However, there are times when seriously disruptive behaviour can require temporary exclusion to take place and we are grateful for the political support we have from the Council in using exclusion as one of our responses to disruptive behaviour. If disruptive behaviour becomes chronic, then alternative educational programmes will be put in place to ensure the safety of the individual and of the wider community. This may include offsite education.

4.8 Our principal partnership is with parents and with the children and young people of Dundee. However, we also wish to recognise and actively foster the valuable and valued partnerships with other Council Departments such as Social Work and Leisure and Communities and agencies both statutory and voluntary such as NHS Tayside, Dundee College, Parent to Parent and Barnardo's. The development in the past two years of Cluster Support Teams and Joint Action Teams are fine examples of joint working leading to advances in developments.

4.9 Staff development, while not the sole answer, is key to ensuring that our staff are as prepared as they can be to face the diverse challenges they and their pupils may encounter in their work settings. A comprehensive programme of Continuous Professional Development has been agreed and implemented (ref. Appendix 1)

4.10 The desire to improve the lives and experience of those who live and work in our centres was further underpinned by the Guidelines contained in the Managing Disruptive Behaviour report. These guidelines include (i) supporting and developing learning and teaching (ii) supporting children and young people (iii) staff development and support (iv) roles and responsibilities and (v) monitoring and evaluation. The report contained 23 action points and these have been taken forward by the Standing Group.

4.11 Every action point has been addressed and progress has been made in implementing all aspects of the report. Managing disruptive behaviour is, however, not isolated from all other aspects of supporting learners to achieve to the best of their abilities.
In the wider context,
- we have developed and published a new supporting learning policy and will shortly be publishing detailed practice guidelines to underpin that policy,
- we are broadening the scope of nurture group provision,
- we have expanded capacity in the primary sector to manage pupils who are significantly disruptive in mainstream settings,
- we are expanding capacity in our off-site education service from S1 to S4,
- together with partners across the city, we are creating more and more opportunities for young people particularly towards the end of their statutory education to find a route towards the world beyond secondary school that best suits them
- together with partners, we are driving forward the integrated children's services agenda in particular with the implementation of multi-agency Joint Action Team from early years to secondary school
- we have a training for leadership programme in place led by our Educational Development Service.

4.12 We recognise that this is a long-term job. We will always have disruptive behaviour to manage and we will always have positive behaviour to promote.

4.13 The Managing Disruptive Behaviour report has been made available to schools and partners in hard copy and is available to all those who are interested via the Council's website as a pdf file. It details the report details the expectation the Director has of her officers and her Head Teachers in supporting school staff to manage and respond well to instances of disruptive behaviour. The responsibility for the management of disruptive behaviour lies with every person who works with the children and young people of Dundee whether that be in a school setting or elsewhere and is rightly considered within the context of whole-school approaches to discipline for learning and the promotion of positive behaviour.

4.14 Within the parameters of the report, the 'Managing Disruptive Behaviour Standing Group' good progress can be reported. The group is taking forward strategic measures aimed at promoting

positive behaviour in schools across Dundee. Linking each of the action points within the 6 key sections of the original report, an action plan has been identified by the Standing Group. This plan aims to support the education service and its partners in developing a framework that best meets the needs of young people including those with additional support needs. It is also focused upon continuing development of the skills base of staff, helping build the capacity of schools to meet the demands of 21st c education within Dundee City. Training is at the heart of progress and, in the context of 'Learning Together in Dundee' and 'A Curriculum for Excellence' and Dundee Education Service priorities, a range of opportunities are being provided to teaching staff on a planned basis through involvement in a range of national approaches including 'Restorative Approaches' and 'Being Cool in School'. In addition to providing staff with a range of strategies aimed at promoting good behaviour, the approaches also encourage young people in schools to make good choices and to support them learn skills for life.

4.15   Every one of these overlapping and related developments underpinned by training and resources is a reflection of national initiatives supported by the national Discipline Task Group and by the Positive Behaviour Team of the Scottish Government one of whom sits on our Managing Disruptive Behaviour Standing Group. Each of them fits well with Learning Together in Dundee and Managing Disruptive Behaviour. They are all designed to:
- encourage the development of pro-social skills
- fit well with 'A Curriculum for Excellence'
- encourage young people (and adults!) to think about their behaviours and actions and to repair harm
- develop skills that are transferable – Learning for Life – equal status as 'academic' skills
- develop fair communities including the community of the school
- build, maintain and repair relationships across schools and communities

4.16   When dealing with attitudes and values - which are what underpin the behaviour of children and the approach they take to discipline and work - it is difficult to provide hard data that will show improvement. One piece of hard data we have is the number of exclusions in the city's schools. Over a five-year period, exclusions in Dundee rose by 33%. In three of our five comparator authorities it rose by 58%, 71% and 101%. In one it remained steady and in only one did it fall - by 42%.

4.17   The Standing Group has set its priorities for 2008 and these are:
- producing an agreed set of common standards for on-site behaviour support in all schools
- providing and promoting relevant training
- developing restorative practices and other approaches to addressing disruptive behaviour
- piloting a new approach aimed at reducing anxiety and addressing mental health issues in children and young people - 'Friends'
- organising relevant training opportunities and activities in all schools - this is also the responsibility of all Head Teachers as well as the Educational Development Service

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. There are no major issues.

6.0   CONSULTATIONS

6.1   The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance) and Head of Finance were consulted in the preparation of this report as was the multi-agency Standing Group on Managing Disruptive Behaviour.

7.0   BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1   None

ANNE WILSON   DATE: 10 APRIL 2008
Director of Education