



**East Lothian**  
Council

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 8 JUNE 2021  
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCING FACILITIES**

**1**

**Committee Members Present:**

Councillor F Dugdale (Convener)  
Councillor S Akhtar  
Councillor J Findlay  
Councillor A Forrest  
Councillor N Gilbert  
Miss G Gillan, EIS  
Councillor J Goodfellow  
Councillor J Henderson  
Councillor C Hoy  
Councillor W Innes  
Councillor S Kempson  
Councillor P McLennan  
Rev G Sheridan  
Councillor J Williamson

**Council Officials Present:**

Ms L Brown, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services  
Dr L Binnie, Principal Educational Psychologist  
Ms L Byrne, Group Service Manager  
Ms K Conway, Solicitor  
Mr N Craik-Collins, Education Service Manager  
Ms K Haspolat, Quality Improvement Officer  
Mr D Henderson, Finance Manager, Service Accounting  
Ms P Homer, Lead Officer, Early Years and Childcare  
Mr R Parker, Service Manager – Education (Strategy and Operations)  
Ms P Smith, Principal Officer (Information and Research)  
Ms L Stewart, Quality Improvement Officer  
Ms J Tait, Head of Children's Services  
Ms J Allen, Communications Adviser  
Ms R Crichton, Committees Officer

**Head Teachers Present:**

Ms A Cameron  
Ms S Cook  
Mr W French  
Mr P Reynolds  
Ms L Rodger

**Others Present:**

Councillor N Hampshire

Councillor J McMillan

Ms N McDowell, Head of Education (with effect from 14.6.21)

**Clerk:**

Ms J Totney, Team Manager – Democratic and Licensing

**Apologies:**

Ms E Malcolm

**Declarations of Interest:**

None

Prior to the commencement of business, the Clerk advised that the meeting was being held remotely, in accordance with the Scottish Government's guidance on physical distancing; that the meeting would be recorded and live streamed; and that it would be made available via the Council's website as a webcast, in order to allow public access to the democratic process in East Lothian. She stated that the Council is the data controller under the Data Protection Act 2018; that data collected as part of the recording would be retained in accordance with the Council's policy on record retention; and that the webcast of the meeting would be publicly available for up to six months from the date of the meeting.

The Clerk recorded attendance of Committee Members by roll call.

**1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON 16 MARCH 2021 FOR APPROVAL**

The minutes of the Education Committee meeting held on 16 March 2021 were approved.

**2. UPDATE ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SCHOOLS AND THE WIDER EDUCATION SERVICE DURIGN SESSION 202/21**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Children's Services providing an update on the impact of COVID-19 on schools and the wider Education Service, along with an update on the lessons learned.

Lesley Brown, Executive Director for Education and Children's Services, explained that the report draws on an update that was provided to full Council in April 2021. She reported on the challenges that learners, schools and families had experienced, summarised the arrangements for the SQA Alternative Certification Model, reminded Members that since April 2020 there has been essential oversight of the safe operation of schools, and wished to record her thanks to school staff, parents, carers and learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. She highlighted that learners have been impacted in a range of ways and reported that ongoing assessment has resulted in interventions, including essential partnership working, to support learners to recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

In response to a question from Councillor Williamson Ms Brown updated Members in relation to the campaign to recruit additional teachers, commenting that there has been

an ongoing campaign in line with Scottish Government funding and that for the academic year ahead, Head Teachers were being invited to submit a business case for staff.

Answering questions from Councillor Findlay about the range of assessments and recruitment campaign for early years and nursery provision, and the transfer of information to support the transition from early years to primary school, Ms Brown explained that there is ongoing assessment of children in this sector by highly skilled staff and that early years staff and practitioners are being recruited, particularly to support 1140 Hours. She added that transition arrangements have been different this year with no primary one school visits but stressed that there is ongoing dialogue about the needs of children who are starting in primary one, especially as many transfer from private nursery providers.

Councillor Akhtar asked a number of questions: what was in place to ensure that the nurture and recovery agenda was consistent across all schools, what support was in place to support teaching staff in relation to their health and wellbeing, and what would the Education Service be doing to engage with young people following the move away from COVID-19 recovery activities. Ms Brown stressed that nurture is the cornerstone of how schools operate and that this has been a focus in all schools through the work of Dr Binnie's Service (Education Psychological Services), supported by the work of the Quality Improvement team. She added that all schools had been asked to prioritise recovery as a key area in every School Improvement Plan, given that there is a direct link between the nurture and recovery agenda. She explained that there has been engagement with school staff at all levels regarding health and wellbeing which had been very well received and commented that there are very good relationships with professional associations. Regarding engagement with young people, Ms Brown advised that there have been virtual meetings with secondary pupils and that Nicola McDowell, who takes up the post of Head of Education on 14 June, will consider ways of engaging with primary school children.

Councillor Gilbert sought an update regarding the distribution of digital devices. Ms Brown advised that there had been some supply issues but that the allocations have been carefully monitored to ensure that no schools or individual learners were disadvantaged.

Ms Gillan, EIS, commented very highly on the report and praised the very effective working relationship with East Lothian Council.

Councillor Akhtar stated that the report was very significant and highlighted an unprecedented year for the whole school community and East Lothian Council. She made particular reference to the speed of implementing remote learning, the work of the Education Recovery Group, the commitment and support from school staff, parents, carers, young people and officers in the Education Service, and the safe return to schools. She commended the Education Service for the recognition of good practice received from the Scottish Government and the leadership from Ms Brown and Councillor Dugdale, Cabinet Spokesperson for Education and Children's Services and Convener of the Education Committee. She expressed her thanks to everyone who has supported the Education Service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councillor Goodfellow supported the comments made by Councillor Akhtar, and stated that the speed and quality of digital learning activities had been really impressive. He added his thanks to all involved.

Councillor Dugdale, Convener, remarked on the enormous efforts from everyone regarding the response to the pandemic; highlighted that there had been a very positive review from Education Scotland; acknowledged the role of Parent Councils; thanked Councillor Akhtar for her all her hard work as previous Education committee Convener; and praised Ms Brown and her team for maintaining a clear focus and vision. She added her heartfelt thanks to all parties who have supported the Education Service during the pandemic.

## **Decision**

The Education Committee agreed to note:

- i. the update on the impact of COVID-19 on schools and the wider Education Service during session 2020/21.
- ii. the update on lessons learned including areas which the service and schools plan to build on and areas where further support will be required as a result of any negative impacts of COVID and school closures.

### **3. IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – MENTAL HEALTH, FAMILY SUPPORT AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Children's Services providing an update on the progress of mental health, family support and service developments to improve outcomes for children and young people across East Lothian.

Ms J Tait, Head of Children's Services, presented the report and highlighted the salient points in relation to improving outcomes for children and the commitment to improving lives through new and integrated services that can meet the increasing mental health impacts being experienced by pupils and parents/carers. She added that service developments are in line with The Promise/Who Cares Scotland and that recent developments included introducing the post of Virtual School Head Teacher. Ms Tait concluded by informing Members that continued funding from the Scottish Government is not guaranteed and that future progress and service development would be kept under review.

Councillor Akhtar commented on the value of the report and asked if there is to be a Parenting and Family Support Strategy at a national level. Ms Tait advised that there is a clear vision for East Lothian, supported by a draft Parenting and Family Support Strategy which ensures that all communities have access to support and targeted interventions. Regarding the national approach, Ms Tait commented that she is a member of the National Family Support Network; the Children's Strategic Partnership is meeting later this week; a new family support co-ordinator has been appointed; and that East Lothian Council is therefore well placed to take on national guidance.

Responding to questions from Ms Gillan and Councillor Goodfellow, Dr Binnie, Service Manager, Inclusion and Wellbeing, explained the ways that counselling services could be accessed and the range of ways in which the service could be provided, which included weekly drop-in sessions and GP referrals. She advised that there are six mental health youth workers across the county, and reported that loss and bereavement group-work sessions will be delivered in August. Regarding the sustainability of the service, Dr Binnie advised that there is core funding for the mental health youth workers in the budget.

**Sederunt:** *Councillor Hoy joined the meeting.*

Replying to Councillor McMillan, Ms Tait advised that there are multi agency support groups, including third sector and health partners, providing a combined support approach to children and families.

Councillor Akhtar welcomed the paper and the work that is being carried out to support people to live, learn and stay in East Lothian, and commended the post of Virtual Head Teacher.

Councillor Forrest valued the work that is being undertaken to provide help to families and drew attention to the fact that money advice for families is another strand that can be factored into the support that is available.

Councillor Goodfellow thanked Ms Tait for the excellent paper and welcomed the fact that there is sustainable funding to deliver elements of the service.

Councillor Dugdale, Convener, added her thanks to Ms Tait and Dr Binnie for the extensive work that is underway to support children and families and hoped that the impact of the work would be recognised by the Scottish Government who would continue to invest in the service. She wished to record her thanks to Ms S Laing, Virtual Head Teacher, and on behalf of the committee wished her well in imminent retirement.

## **Decision**

The Education Committee agreed to note:

- i. the progress being made in supporting children and young people's mental health.
- ii. the work underway to strengthen the family support offer.
- iii. the aspects of service development and improvement as outlined in this report.

## **4. UPDATE ON EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE TO 1140 HOURS**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Children's Services updating the committee on the implementation of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare in East Lothian.

Ms P Homer, Lead Officer – Early Years and Childcare, presented the report and highlighted the challenges that has resulted in a delay of one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic which included the safe reopening of both local authority and private settings; the phasing and delivery models that would be available from August 2021; the Council's new 1140 Hours website; the Council's response to maintaining the National Standard as set out by Scottish Government; funding for providers; career development opportunities; and that despite the challenges and delays, 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare will be available in full to all families in East Lothian in the new academic year.

Councillor Findlay posed questions regarding readiness for the next academic year and feedback from parents. Ms Homer advised that there had been some slippage in works to the physical estate due to COVID-19 and that contingencies were in place

which means that no family would be disadvantaged as a result. She shared some of the comments from parents, explained that most families requirements are different, advised that formal feedback would be sought once the 1140 Hours had been up and running fully for some time, and acknowledged Councillor Findlay's request to consider a formal consultation with parents ahead of the next academic year.

Responding to Councillor Williamson, Ms Homer advised that nursery facilities are not subject to catchment areas and that parents can apply to any nursery.

Councillor Dugdale thanked all officers involved in delivering 1140 Hours. She also took the opportunity to record that a number of Head Teachers were present at today's meeting and indicated that Head Teachers would be invited to support all meetings of the Education Committee in future.

### **Decision**

The Education Committee agreed to note:

- i. the way in which COVID-19 restrictions in Scottish Government and Public Health Guidance continue to impact on the provision of 1140 hours.
- ii. the progress made in making 1140 hours available to families in East Lothian through all providers including Local Authority nurseries and partnership working with funded providers.
- iii. the numbers of children currently accessing 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare and the models and hours to be made available through local authority nurseries for the academic year 2021 – 2022.
- iv. the work undertaken to ensure quality as a key principle of the expansion.
- v. continued success of the 1140 hours programme and the job opportunities this has created.

## **5. IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR ALL – RAISING ATTAINMENT STRATEGY**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Children's Services providing an update on the work underway across Education and Children's Services to improve outcomes for all, through raising attainment and achievement and reducing the poverty-related attainment gap. The report also sets out the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and seeks approval of the range of actions underway as part of the Raising Attainment Strategy.

Mr N Trussler, Quality Improvement Officer, presented the report and stressed that there is a continued strong focus on raising attainment to ensure that every child achieves the highest standard in numeracy and literacy. He referred to key items in the report including action plans, funding, and the Audit Scotland report: "Improving Outcomes for Young People". He reminded Members that there are temporary gaps in data due to the COVID-19 pandemic when no data was collected in June 2020, and stated that the data for 2019/20 could not be used for comparative year-on-year analysis. Mr Trussler concluded by highlighting some of the key data and trends in relation to items such as positive destinations and school leaver awards.

Councillor McMillan asked about positive destinations and feedback from employers to which Mr Craik-Collins, Education Services Manager, reported on the Kick-Start

initiative and other ongoing activities with East Lothian Works, Foundation Apprenticeships, and relationships with businesses.

Councillor Akhtar enquired about consistency of recording across all schools; Councillor Goodfellow raised a question about Pupil Equity Funding, and Councillor Hampshire asked about support from the Council for families living in poverty in relation to attainment. In response, Mr Trussler spoke about the raising attainment priority which features in every school Improvement Plan, and confirmed that the Pupil Equity Funding had been continued for 2021/22. He further indicated that schools are using school-based data to identify equity gaps, schools are receiving support from Quality Improvement Officers and the Scottish Government's Attainment Adviser, that school improvement plans are evaluated throughout the session to ensure that the identified outcomes are being met, and schools are best placed to identify and address poverty related attainment gaps in conjunction with families and partner agencies.

Ms Brown advised that the Scottish Government are currently reviewing the Attainment Challenge and that she is one of three Directors of Education from across Scotland who sit on that Advisory Board.

Ms Gillan commented that attainment is at the centre of the education system, welcomed the new work streams referred to in the report and looked forward to working with East Lothian Council to focus on attainment priorities.

Councillor Akhtar stated that the provision of education is one of the most important responsibilities of the local authority, and was heartened to learn that Ms Brown was a member of the Advisory Board. She added that Members would also monitor developments via CoSLA.

Councillor Forrest welcomed the report and thanked Parent Councils, Head Teachers and staff in his local Ward.

Councillor Goodfellow welcomed the fact that the Scottish Government is to review the Attainment Fund and was hopeful that via input from Ms Brown the discriminatory nature of the fund would be removed.

***Sederunt:*** *Councillors Kempson and McLennan left the meeting.*

Councillor Dugdale, Convener, welcomed the clear commitment to achieving equity and closing the attainment gaps. She commented positively on elements of the data and stressed the need to strive to improve outcomes for all children and young people. In closing, she took the opportunity to extend good wishes to Head Teachers Colin Gerrie and Lauren Rodger who would be leaving the Education Service at the end of the current school year.

## **Decision**

Following a roll call vote the Education Committee unanimously agreed to:

- i. note the contents of this report and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on East Lothian learners.
- ii. note the key successes, areas of progress and action being taken by schools and the Education Service to improve pupil attainment during the current school session 2020-21 and planned for session 2021-22.

- iii. note the key successes, areas of progress and action being taken by East Lothian Works to ensure continued positive destinations and employability options for school leavers.
- iv. approve the actions and key areas of focus as outlined at 3.9.1 – 3.9.5 as part of the development of a Raising Attainment Strategy focused on improving outcomes for all.

## **6 SOUTH EAST IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE - UPDATE**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Children's Services providing an update on the work of the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) including the new SEIC Regional Improvement Plan - April 2021.

Ms Brown provided an annual update on the work of the SEIC and outlined the salient points from the report, highlighting the next steps, partnership working, new strategic goals, and welcomed that Ms L Stewart, Quality Improvement Officer at East Lothian Council, was currently working to the SEIC.

Councillor Akhtar commented that it is positive to see the positive benefits of SEIC and acknowledged the time that officers have committed to this. Ms Brown stated that the SEIC priorities are very much aligned with East Lothian Council and that the Collaborative provides a level of additionality that the Council previously did not have.

In response to Councillor Goodfellow, Ms Stewart advised that the lead teachers are subject based, not faculty based and that there is real collaboration between these teachers and the Quality Improvement Officers.

Councillor Dugdale, Convener, stated that East Lothian Council had made a significant contribution to the SEIC, despite being a small local authority. Ms Brown confirmed that East Lothian officers were a strong part of the Collaborative and were involved in a range of groups, adding that participation was very beneficial and offered the opportunity to influence future developments, share best practice, and learn from others.

Councillor Goodfellow praised the real progress made by the SEIC and the confidence that teachers have in the Collaboration.

Councillor Akhtar welcomed the alignment with the East Lothian Education Improvement Plan and expressed her appreciation that such collaborations take place.

Councillor Dugdale closed the item by commenting that it was helpful for the committee to see the developments from the SEIC and the benefits to East Lothian Council.

### **Decision**

The Education Committee agreed to note:

- i. the SEIC Regional Improvement Plan dated April 2021, at appendix 1 to the report.
- ii. the priority areas for improvement being taken forward in partnership with members of the SEIC and the progress made towards improving professional collaboration and school empowerment across the SEIC.



## **7 LEARNING ESTATE REVIEW - UPDATE**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Children’s Services providing an update on the progress with the Learning Estate Review pre-consultation and the plans for the next stage of the community consultation.

Mr Craik-Collins updated the committee on the plans for a community consultation and full public pre-consultation exercise, together with the statutory requirement to develop a strategic Learning Estate Investment Plan. He summarised the timelines and phasing as detailed in the report and provided details of the next steps in terms of community engagement.

As requested by Councillor Akhtar, Mr Craik-Collins elaborated on the engagement with young people and stressed the importance of engaging with young pupils, although the logistics of doing so are difficult due to the pandemic.

In response to Councillor Dugdale, Mr Craik-Collins advised that there had been a good level of engagement with the online consultation. Councillor Dugdale thanked officers for this important piece of work and took the opportunity to wish Mr M Bedwell, Learning Estates Officer, well on his move to a new post outwith East Lothian Council.

### **Decision**

The Education Committee agreed to note:

- i. the completion of phase 1 of the Learning Estate Review pre-consultation
- ii. the impact of the pandemic on the timeline and plans for community-based engagement workshops.

## **8. HEAD TEACHER APPOINTMENTS**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director for Education and Children’s Services informing the Committee of the Head Teacher appointments made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.

Ms Brown signposted Members to the Head Teacher appointments as detailed in the report.

Councillor Goodfellow commented that the high number of good quality candidates reflected well on the Education Service in East Lothian.

Councillor Dugdale, Convener, extended a warm welcome to the new Head Teachers and thanked the members of the Parent Councils who took part in the recruitment process.

Signed .....

Councillor Fiona Dugdale  
Convener of the Education Committee



**REPORT TO:** Education Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 23 November 2021

**BY:** Executive Director for Education & Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Update on the Ongoing Impact of COVID-19 on Schools and the Wider Education Service during Session 2021/2022

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**2**

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the continued impact of COVID-19 on schools and the wider Education Service during session 2021/22.
- 1.2 To provide an update on lessons learned including areas which the service and schools plan to build on and areas where further support will be required as a result of any negative impacts of COVID-19.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
  - i. Note the considerable work continuing to be undertaken by the Education Service and school staff in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in session 2021-2022.
  - ii. Note the lessons learned including positive developments that we plan to build on and areas where further support is required.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Please refer to the Education Committee COVID-19 Update Report of 8 June 2021 for comprehensive background information on steps that have been taken by both the Education Service and schools to implement Scottish Government guidance to ensure the safe operation of schools during the pandemic.

## 3.2 School Session 2021/22

- 3.2.1 The latest version of Scottish Government *Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools* guidance was updated on the return to school after the summer break in August 2021. It set out that local authorities and schools should continue to apply the mitigations that were in place at the end of the previous term until at least the October holidays. This included the use of face coverings for secondary school pupils in classes, and for all staff in circulation spaces around schools, or where a 2 metre distance could not be maintained.
- 3.2.2 At the time of writing, just after the October break, the decision has been taken not to relax any mitigations further until COVID numbers have dropped more significantly and more children and young people have been vaccinated.
- 3.2.3 Information letters (previously called Warn and Inform letters) are now issued to low risk close contacts following a positive case of a pupil or staff member and those who receive these are encouraged to take a lateral flow test before returning to school. Administration of these letters continues to be undertaken by a seconded member of staff, with less involvement of school staff in the contact tracing process.
- 3.2.4 Other mitigations retained include one-way systems, staggered start and finish times, restrictions on assemblies and meetings of large groups and twice weekly asymptomatic testing for staff and secondary school pupils.
- 3.2.5 Non-essential visitors in schools continued to be restricted, meaning that any forthcoming parental consultations will take place virtually.
- 3.2.6 Given the ongoing uncertainties and risk associated with the spread of the virus amongst children and staff, CMT have taken the decision that there should be no residential trips for the remainder of Session 2021/22.
- 3.3 Overall, East Lothian schools have reported that almost all learners had a positive return to school in August 2021. The continued focus of schools on nurture and relationships continues to support this. For a small number of learners across schools, the impact of COVID school closures has had a detrimental impact on their wellbeing and their progress in learning. Schools have identified these learners quickly, and interventions are in place to provide additional support throughout this session to ensure that we get it right for all of our learners.
- 3.4 Interventions include direct teaching support and small group interventions to enhance learning where gaps have been identified. This is underpinned by the use of our Scottish Government-funded COVID teachers and support staff. We are also working with our partners to implement a further year of the East Lothian Tutoring Initiative which in year one supported around 200 young people from S4 to S6 across all six secondary schools.

- 3.5 Schools have continued to experience staffing shortages, mainly related to staff waiting for PCR results following contact tracing, with one school having to have some year groups move to remote learning for a very short period of time. Huge efforts have been made across schools to ensure there are teachers for every class and to maintain continuity of learning. Parents and Carers have continued to receive regular communication regarding changes to mitigations, and the risk of remote learning under exceptional circumstances.
- 3.6 Severe shortages of Facilities Management staff due to absence means that there has been some disruption to provision of facilities services in other areas of the Council to ensure that schools can be prioritised for enhanced cleaning and delivery of the school lunch service. Dining halls reopened on 6 September 2021 so that hot lunches can now be served and we can adhere to new Scottish Government nutritional guidelines. There has been very successful partnership working across Council services to maintain continuity of provision.
- 3.7 Scottish Government Ministers have made the decision that SQA exams should go ahead in 2022, if it is safe to do so. East Lothian schools are planning their approaches to supporting young people through their learning in their chosen national qualification courses, and the approaches that will be used to assess their own progress as we near the planned exam diet beginning in April 2022.

East Lothian schools are basing these plans on the scenarios set out on the website below and the potential associated contingencies that will be required in certain related circumstances to support young people through their studies this session.

Further information can be found on the SQA website: [SQA National Qualifications 21-22 Website](#).

- 3.8 The Education Recovery Group has been in place since April 2020 and continues to have rigorous oversight of the planning and implementation of any new Scottish Government guidance to ensure the safe operation of schools buildings and continued provision of education in the event of school building closure. The group will remain in place until such times as all mitigations are removed. Related recovery working groups remain in place to support specific areas of focus such as supporting the workforce, adapting the physical environment and advising on health and safety considerations for children with Additional Support Needs. A range of staff from across the Council and representatives of the Trade Unions continue to support the work of these groups and both consider the implications of any revised Scottish Government guidance as well as providing practical advice and support to staff in schools. Regular meetings with Trade Unions continue in order to ensure a collaborative approach is taken to supporting the delivery of education across our schools and early years' settings during these challenging circumstances.
- 3.9 Guidance issued in September 2021 required local authorities to ensure that all schools and day care of children services have access to CO2 monitoring,

whether via mobile or fixed devices to support the goal of all school and East Lothian Council buildings, including all learning, teaching and childcare spaces, being assessed for ventilation issues with a view to remedial action being taken where required. Scottish Government required that this assessment work was to be completed by the start of the October break. Education and Infrastructure colleagues collaborated at very short notice to procure monitors and deploy them along with advice and guidance to schools. Agreement was reached with teaching unions that teachers could carry out this monitoring in the assessment phase.

Scottish Government allocated £10M of funding for this piece of work, of which East Lothian Council was allocated £205,000. This was used to procure the monitors and will be used if required, to support remedial works.

Every teaching space in East Lothian schools, and every Early Learning and Childcare playroom including those of funded providers has now been assessed. A multiagency group will now meet to assess the results and decide on appropriate remedial actions if required. Results have been largely reassuring and positive.

### **3.10 Impact on children and young people**

3.10.1 In order that we now robustly address 'lost learning' over the last school session, our Raising Attainment Strategy has been updated to have a recovery focus, with our aspiration being that by the end of this session, attainment returns to pre-pandemic levels.

In Literacy and Numeracy, we have in place universal and targeted approaches to improvement through high quality professional learning. A robust focus at Associated School Group level on the How Good is our School Quality Indicator 3.2 *Raising Attainment and Achievement* with related support and challenge conversations and a data-informed approach is further supporting schools.

Our Literacy and Numeracy strategies are being updated to ensure that recovery is a key focus.

Individual school Service Level Agreements created between Head Teachers and the Quality Improvement service reflect the improvements expected, the supports required and the results anticipated. This allows us to deploy support proportionately to further support recovery at school level.

3.10.2 While most children and young people have managed to return to in-school learning, there is still a small cohort whose anxiety has caused a barrier to their return. School staff, and staff from our Inclusion and Wellbeing Service continue to work proactively with them and their families to ensure they are supported and continue to learn.

3.10.3 A further £1.042M of Scottish Government funding has been allocated to support recovery, which will be used to support further targeted interventions to support lost learning and the Raising Attainment Strategy.

### 3.11 Conclusion and Further Implications for session 2021/22

- 3.11.1 Given the continued impact on children's wellbeing and learning, we will continue to prioritise support that ensures all children and young people are able to make appropriate progress. We will continue to make the best possible use of all available resources to support our staff working directly with learners.

It is likely that we will continue to see the impact of the pandemic for years to come on our learners. Schools and the wider education service will do everything we can to mitigate this impact, learn the lessons of what has worked and what we need to improve and ensure that we continue to improve outcomes for all.

## 4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

## 5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Equalities – the impact of COVID-19 has had and continues to have an impact on the wellbeing and learning of children, families and communities. Work continues to seek to mitigate this impact in all schools.

## 6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – The Scottish Government provided £214.833 million of additional Education funding for financial year 2020/21 and is providing a further £111.667 million of additional funding in 2021/22 for Scottish Councils. East Lothian's share of this funding was £3.689 million in 2020/21 and is £2.159 million, to date, in 2021/22. **Table 1** below sets out the funding for 2020/21 and **Table 2** sets out the funding for 2021/22.

In order to ensure effective management of financial resources to aid the education recovery in 2021/22, an education recovery finance workstream including senior members of the Education Management Team and the Finance Manager for Service Accounting has been established by the Education Recovery Group.

Financial – The Scottish Government provided £214.833 million of additional Education funding for financial year 2020/21 and has provided a further £111.667 million of additional funding in 2021/22 for Scottish Councils. East Lothian's share of this funding was £3.689 million in 2020/21 and is £2.159 million, to date, in 2021/22. **Table 1** below sets out the funding for 2020/21.

**Table 2** sets out a further tranche of funding which provided a further £6m of funding, giving East Lothian £1.169, equating to 21 teachers and 10 support staff.

**Table 1 – 2021/22 Additional Education COVID Funding**

<b>Funding Purpose</b>	<b>Scottish Total £m</b>	<b>East Lothian Allocation £m</b>
Recruitment of Additional Teachers	16.667	0.318
Recruitment of Additional Teachers (2nd Tranche)	10.000	0.190
Additional Teachers	25.000	0.482
Education Recovery Funding	60.000	1.169
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>111.667</b>	<b>2.159</b>

**Table 2 – 2021/22 Additional Education COVID Funding**

<b>Funding Purpose</b>	<b>Scottish Total £m</b>	<b>East Lothian Allocation £m</b>
Recruitment of Additional Permanent Teachers and Additional Permanent Pupil Support Assistants	60	1.169

- 6.2 Personnel – Funding for additional staffing for schools has been allocated by Scottish Government to compensate for any loss of learning suffered during the COVID-19 lockdown. We have appointed 13.8fte teachers in primary and 6.8fte teachers in secondary from this funding, as well as 18fte primary and 10fte secondary support staff.

We are currently recruiting for the further 21 teachers and 10 support staff from the latest tranche of Scottish Government Funding.

- 6.3 Other – none.

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None

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<b>DATE</b>	10 November 2021



**REPORT TO:** Education Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 23 November 2021

**BY:** Executive Director for Education & Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan 2021/2022

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## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1. To seek the Committee's approval of the Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan on key improvement priorities achieved for session 2020/21 and identification of key improvement priorities planned for session 2021/22.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to:
- i. Note the overall positive progress made by the Education Service in delivery of the Council's Plan and the priorities within the National Improvement Framework.
  - ii. Note the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the progress of the 2020/21 priorities and the steps being taken to secure continuous improvement in session 2021/22.
  - iii. Approve the Progress Report and Improvement Plan (Appendix 1).
  - iv. Note that this Progress Report and Improvement Plan will be submitted to the Scottish Government in line with the Local Authority's statutory duty pending Committee approval.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places a duty on the education authority to annually prepare and publish a report as to its

success in meeting the objectives set out in the most recently published Education Local Improvement Plan.

- 3.2 The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 amended the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 placing new duties on education authorities in to the preparation and publication of annual plans and reports linked to the National Improvement Framework.
- 3.3 As a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government has noted that all education authorities will have experienced an impact in relation to their capacity to respond to the emergency situation, to support the safe reopening of schools and to continue with existing plans to secure continuous improvement. In addition, the Scottish Government has encouraged education authorities to prioritise the emergency response and recovery and where possible to streamline ongoing improvement priorities.
- 3.4 The Education Service has reviewed progress from last session as part of a range of ongoing methods of self-evaluation. In addition, officers have reviewed school standards and quality reports and school improvement plans in order to ascertain where further improvement is required.
- 3.5 In session 2020/21, Education and Children's Services brought together their previous improvement plans in to one document. This was intended to support the ongoing work in integrating education and children's services. Given the significant pressures on both services it has not been possible to produce a joint plan for session 2021/22. However, work is already underway to support the ongoing integration agenda and this work, will in turn support the development of a meaningful plan for session 2022/23.
- 3.6 While in the past the report has also included a data pack summarising the range of data that informs our improvement actions, this data is not publicly available at this point.
- 3.7 **Key Successes, Summary of Progress and Next Steps**
  - 3.7.1 A summary of the progress made with the main priorities for the Education Service between August 2020 and June 2021, is outlined below alongside the key areas where further progress is required.
  - 3.7.2 **Attainment and achievement** – Work is well underway to take forward the actions set out in the Raising Attainment Strategy approved by Education Committee in June 2021. For example, data directed discussions with Head Teachers at Associated School Group (ASG) meetings and on an individual basis are ensuring that there is a robust focus on raising attainment overall, and within targeted groups. All schools have a specific focus on raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap in their School Improvement Plan. The use of the SEEMIS module Progress and Achievement is now established across the Broad General Education (BGE) in all schools with all schools having received teacher professional learning sessions on its use in 2020-21, and the majority of schools now using it. This is becoming more robust within Early Learning and Childcare settings.

Use of the Early Learning and Childcare Quality Assurance Guidance, along with schools' use of the Quality Indicator Toolkit, have ensured a continued focus on evaluated outcomes leading to informed improvements in most Early Years settings.

The Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy is being reviewed to take into consideration the positive impact of COVID upon digital learning and practitioner professional learning.

- 3.8 **Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion (GIRFEC)** – Getting it Right for every East Lothian child continues to be at the heart of all of our work. This is particularly important given the impact of the pandemic on children's wellbeing and learning. The Child's Planning Framework guidance and documentation has been updated.
- 3.8.1 In addition, an updated draft *Included, Engaged & Involved: A Positive Approach to Promoting School Attendance* that includes updated guidance on home education and flexi-schooling has been developed. This document has been distributed for consultation and is being presented to Education Committee today for approval.
- 3.8.2 A school-based counselling service is now in place for children aged 10 and above. This service is delivered by MYPAS and to date, 140 children and young people, across all schools, have been accepted for support. Remote drop-in sessions are in place.
- 3.8.3 A Mental Health Youth Work team is in place and is working closely with schools and colleagues to deliver a range of interventions and projects. A one door, single point of access is now in place to accept requests for assistance from professionals who have concerns about a child or young person's mental health and wellbeing.
- 3.8.4 Support for schools continues in developing nurturing pedagogy and relational approaches through the delivery of a range of professional learning opportunities including Learn Pro modules, nurture network and conferences.
- 3.8.5 Support for the wellbeing, learning and attainment of our care experienced young people is being provided through an increased collaboration with Children's Services and the development and professional learning of a new network of Designated Managers for care experience in every school. This is leading to increased inclusion and opportunities for care experienced young people to ensure good progress in their learning and attainment. Their voice has been increased through opportunities for self-directed support in relation to learning and through further development of younger Champs Groups in partnership with Who Cares Scotland. Alternative education programmes have been created with a small number of care experienced young people who have been disengaged from mainstream school. Almost all of these young people have achieved national qualifications, which have enabled them to move forward into positive destinations.

- 3.9 **Employability** – East Lothian Works (ELW) has continued to support employability for both young people and adults throughout the pandemic. Additional SG funding has helped to support a range of important interventions. For example, ELW was successful in bidding for the KickStart contract and became both a Gateway Organisation and an Employer. This contract awarded 55 fully-funded places. ELW has also developed and introduced a ‘Workforce for the Future’ strategy, which will support a range of training and apprenticeships opportunities. Education Support Officers in Literacy and Numeracy have been appointed to lead innovative approaches to Family Learning, in collaboration with Children’s Services.

ELW is now offering an extensive School to College Partnership (SCP) programme and a portfolio of Foundation Apprenticeships has been developed in line with labour market intelligence for the region. There are currently 50 Foundation Apprentices, which is an increase from the 2019-20 figure of 43. All 12 Foundation Apprentices from the 2019-20 who were studying Scientific Technologies successfully completed their courses. Two fully funded staff are now in post to deliver Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE), which provides support for vulnerable businesses and those at risk of redundancy.

- 3.10 **Leadership** – We have continued to develop a programme of joint professional learning for senior leaders across Education and Children’s Services. Our management teams are increasingly working together and having a positive joint impact.

Schools are increasingly working together in Associated School Groups and School Team Groups to lead and support improvement and an increasing number of schools and practitioners have engaged in the work of the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC).

- 3.11 **Finance and Resources**- The review of the Learning estate has continued, with Phase 1 including an online survey completed in the first half of 2021. Phase 2 of the review, (informal community consultation sessions) is scheduled for November 2021. A new Learning Estate Senior Managers’ Group was formed that reviews progress with the Learning Estate on a fortnightly basis. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on construction work in East Lothian. Whilst work did stop during both lockdowns, work has resumed and we have recently completed the largest programme of summer works designed to improve aspects of the condition and suitability of the estate. In addition, due to continued population growth, we are in the process of extending 17 schools and building a number of new schools across the county.

- 3.11.1 We are undertaking a full review of the Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme for both primary and secondary schools as part of the review being undertaken by the Scottish Government. In addition, we have established a working group that will focus on reviewing approaches to ASN funding including predictable and exceptional needs funding to ensure resources are targeted to better meet children’s needs.

3.11.2 Of particular note is the success of the Instrumental Music Service which maintained provision in all current East Lothian schools throughout the school session, offering weekly lessons for 857 pupils. Throughout the session it once again expanded to offer instrumental provision in **all** East Lothian schools and promote equitable access to music making.

### **3.12 Key challenges and opportunities**

3.12.1 The first part of the Progress Report and Improvement Plan also sets out the key challenges and opportunities facing the Education Service for 2021/22 and beyond. It also seeks to align these with the key areas of focus for our teams.

3.12.2 We continue to be firmly focused on improving outcomes for all of our children and young people and ensuring they have a very high quality education service. Our county is rapidly expanding and this presents a range of exciting opportunities as we continue with our work to expand our school estate. We are committed to continuing to improve our approaches for children and young people who require additional support to ensure that the right support is being provided at the right time, in the right place to those who need it most. We will continue to work in partnership with our Head Teachers and staff through our ongoing support, and the next stages of the development of our Self-Improving Schools System.

3.12.3 We will continue to implement key national policies including the Scottish Government's commitment to raise attainment for those children and young people who face barriers to their learning due to the impact of poverty and disadvantage. We will also continue to implement the required actions and steps taken to take forward the four priority areas set out in the National Improvement Framework across the key drivers for improvement.

## **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The reporting of performance and the planning for improvement is a statutory duty placed on the education authority. The annual publication of a Progress Report and Improvement Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to fulfilling this duty.

## **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## **6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Financial - none

6.2 Personnel - none

6.2 Other - none

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Education Service Progress and Improvement Plan 2020/21 (Appendix 1)

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East Lothian  
Council

# EDUCATION PROGRESS REPORT & IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021/22



## Contents

Page

<b>3</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Covid-19 in East Lothian</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Context of East Lothian</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Progress during session 2020/21 with our priorities</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Education Service Improvement Priorities 2020/21: Evaluation of progress and next steps</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Continued impact of COVID-19 and implications for improvement planning 2021/22</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>Glossary</b>
<b>33</b>	<b>Appendices</b>



## Introduction

Welcome to the East Lothian Education Progress Report and Improvement Plan. Across East Lothian we are ambitious for our children and young people and working together, we will support them to be confident, resilient and to achieve within their schools and wider communities. During 2019, Education and Children's Services came together as one integrated service. We are now working together to ensure everything we do, starts with the child and family and builds the right support and services around them.

Working together, we:

- **Share common values, approaches, behaviour and a strong commitment to do the very best for East Lothian's children and young people**
- **promote and prioritise early intervention and prevention**
- **take a relationship-based approach with each other, our children, young people and their families promote creativity and innovation**
- **want East Lothian to be an inclusive place to live and learn.**



Our approaches will ensure that we support our children and families to have the very best start in life and that they can go on to have fulfilling lives, better health and living longer. Our vision and values also align closely with the Key Priorities in the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education 'Achieving Excellence and Equity' (*Scottish Government, January 2016*) and Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education (*Scottish Government, June 2016*):

- **Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;**
- **Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children;**
- **Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; and**
- **Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all.**

We will continue to have a relentless focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All. We all work together to Get it Right for Every Child and to ensure that all our children and young people are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

This Progress Report highlights our evaluation of Education priorities from 2020/21, and also sets out our improvement priorities for Session 2021/22.

## **COVID-19 in East Lothian**

At the start of the new school session 2020/21, our schools successfully reopened. School staff, children and families adapted very well to the 'new normal', albeit that the required mitigations to ensure the health and safety of all users remained challenging. School staff remained mindful that our children and young people each had very different experiences and have worked hard to assess children's progress and to support them to move on in their learning.

The subsequent further period of lockdown post-Christmas signalled to us that the pace of improvement and change was disrupted and we had to reassess our priorities and refocus on what matters for all children and young people. Our aim is always to progress with all of our

improvement priorities but there remains no doubt that our focus changed, with recovery being at the heart, and the pace of change has been adapted to suit the circumstances.

## Context of East Lothian

East Lothian's population is projected to grow by about 1% a year over the next 19 years from just over 100 000 to over 125 000 by 2037. Significant growth is projected across all age groups but particularly among children with the 0-16 year group projected to grow by almost a third.



In 2020/21 there were:

- 8,557 pupils in East Lothian Council's 34 primary schools
- 6,325 pupils in six secondary schools
- 2,449 children accessing 600 hours of early learning and childcare across 33 Local Authority settings and 18 private and voluntary sector partnership centres
- 148 Eligible 2's
- Specialist provision in enhanced learning centres is provided within 5 mainstream primary schools and 2 mainstream secondary schools with 62 primary and 58 secondary pupils attending during this academic session
- 26.7% of all pupils had an additional support need (up from 24.0% in 2019/20)
- 1.4% of all pupils were recorded as care experienced, in line with the previous year

- 5.9% of pupils were recorded as living in the 20% most deprived areas compared with 20.2% in the 20% least deprived areas. This was broadly in line with the previous academic session
- The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) was maintained at 15.1.
- The Average primary class size decreased slightly to 23.6 (down from 24.2 in 2019/20).
- 76% of our primary school buildings were reported as in 'good' or 'satisfactory' condition
- 100% of our secondary school buildings were reported as in 'good' or 'satisfactory' condition

***Further information on our services and teams is contained in Appendix 1.***

## Progress during session 2020/21 with our priorities

This next section of this report describes the progress made with the main priorities for the Education Service between August 2020 and June 2021. The reports sets out what we have achieved and areas where further progress is needed. In the second section of the report, we set out our key priorities for session 2021/22 which takes account of our progress to date, what the data is telling us and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 places duties on education authorities in relation to the delivery of school education and having due regard to reduce inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. This Act requires education authorities to prepare and publish an annual report setting out the steps taken to secure improvements in education provision and outcomes set out in the National Improvement Framework Improvement Plan and those identified by the Council. The Scottish Government expects every education authority to prepare and submit a National Improvement Framework Plan and Progress Report by the end of August, annually.



This Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan continues to take account of the priorities set out in the Scottish Government's 2020 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan, East Lothian Children and Young People's Services Plan and the East Lothian Council Plan. The focus for session 2021/22 is 'Getting it Right for Our Children – Living and Learning in East Lothian'.

Our aim is to continue to develop an integrated service that seeks to get it right for all of our children, living and learning in East Lothian through the actions taken across our service areas and in our schools, and to improve the quality of the experiences we provide for children, young people and families in East Lothian.

Overall, progress has been made to deliver on most of the key priorities and objectives set out in the Education Service Plan, however this has been adversely affected by the pandemic. Quality Frameworks such as How Good is Our School? (4<sup>th</sup> edition) and the East Lothian How Good is our Service Framework continue to support the Education Service to benchmark our service provision, including feedback from our key stakeholders.

We continue to make use of a range of data and evidence to inform progress made with current priorities and inform future areas for improvement. In line with national expectations, this includes pupil, parent and staff surveys. Further evidence gathered to inform this progress report would usually include the following, however Education Scotland inspections were on hold all year and in-school visits have not been permitted due to COVID guidance restrictions:

- Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate reports on schools and services
- School validation/review visits
- Attainment and achievement data, including Local Government Benchmarking Framework data (though there are limitations in the use of SQA data for both years due to the cancellation of the examination diets)

Attainment data previously published is accurate up until 2018/19. Following that, alternative assessment arrangements as a result of the pandemic meant that data collected either wasn't published or could not be meaningfully compared to previous years. All the most up to date data and projections are contained within the Raising Attainment Strategy which was agreed at Council in June 2021.

New data is not yet available. ACEL (Curriculum for Excellence) data will be published in December 2021, and Insight data will be published in February 2022. We are not permitted to share this data until that time.

## Education Service Improvement Priorities 2020/21: Evaluation of progress and next steps

### **PRIORITY 1 : Attainment and Achievement**

#### **In Session 2020/21 we aimed to:**

- Continue to embed the self-improving schools model.
- Develop and trial new school review methodology.
- Strengthen curricular transitions and progression in learning from 3-18 years.
- Develop a consistent approach for assessing, monitoring and tracking learning to deliver optimum levels of attainment and achievement.
- Finalise our Raising Attainment Strategy and develop further schools' own approaches to raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- Develop a literacy strategy and approaches to improve literacy outcomes across schools.
- Develop robust approaches to assessment and moderation to further enhance assessment of children's progress at school level and to support continued learning and achievement.
- Review lessons learned in terms of service provision as a result of COVID closure of schools and how these can contribute to more effective approaches to raising achievement and meeting learners' needs.
- Finalise and launch our new Attendance Policy and develop new approaches that increases all children and young people's attendance and engagement at school. Review our approaches to Home Education and update our policy to reflect Scottish Government guidance and best practice.
- Continue to seek ways to implement the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- Continue to focus on improving the attainment and achievement of looked after children and young people.
- Continue to support our looked after children and young people to achieve by implementing the Corporate Parenting Plan.

### **Evaluation of Progress**

- Progress has been made in terms of data directed discussions with Head Teachers at Associated School Group (ASG) meetings. Each ASG met five times throughout the session and these meetings have informed wider improvement areas including raising attainment, digital learning, school improvement planning, standards and quality reporting and Pupil Equity Funding evaluation and planning for 2021-22. Use of the Early Learning and Childcare Quality Assurance Guidance, along with schools' use of the Quality Indicator Toolkit, have ensured a continued focus on evaluated outcomes leading to informed improvements in most schools.
- A short-life working group was established comprising Head Teachers, Quality Improvement Officers, Education Scotland and SEIC Associate Assessors but this area of improvement was paused in April 2020 as a result of school closures. It will be resumed in October 2021.
- Curricular transitions formed part of the wider Raising Attainment Strategy with a focus on P7 to S1 transition and progression into third and fourth levels of the BGE. This is still at an early stage but will inform future test for change work, leading to wider improvements across secondary schools in the future .The Early Learning and Childcare transition project has strengthened transition arrangements at early level. Schools have developed new and innovative ways to strengthen the transition experience of pupils as a result of recent COVID restrictions such as virtual 'meet the teacher' sessions, online video tours of secondary schools, and the use of Google Classroom for P7-S1 transition activities.
- The use of the SEEMIS module Progress and Achievement is established across the Broad General Education (BGE) in all schools with all schools having received teacher professional learning sessions on its use in 2020-21, and the majority of schools now using it. This is becoming more robust within Early Learning and Childcare settings. Our aspiration is that 100% of settings will be using this by the end of Session 2021/22. Information contained within Progress and Achievement is used by schools as part of their data informed tracking and monitoring of pupil progress at individual pupil, class and whole school level. Through their self-evaluation procedures, schools have identified the need for further moderation in relation to the quality of assessment information entered into Progress and Achievement to ensure accuracy. The Progress and Achievement Analysis Tool has been developed for school leadership teams to work with the data to produce gap analysis and inform discussions internally with classroom teachers.
- Sharing of a variety of data at ASG level, for example attainment at and within BGE, SIMD, pupil ASN, school context, EAL, etc for each session and comparison of trends over time has resulted in greater awareness and shared understanding of the barriers to attainment for learners across East Lothian schools. In response, work streams were established to focus on five attainment areas; Early Level attainment, Writing attainment, attainment of boys, closing the poverty related attainment gap and BGE curriculum transitions. There is a high level of ownership and shared professional commitment to affect change and improvement through each work stream involving head teachers, deputes, principal teachers, secondary, primary and ELCC practitioners and other partners. Additional strategic support focussing on quality improvement has been provided by the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative (Scottish Government) and our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, through the

delivery of high quality professional learning to those involved in each work stream. This has supported each work stream to better identify clear priorities for improvement in their designated area. The awareness raising of the attainment agenda through the development of the strategy can be seen in 12 primary schools' participation in the Early Level Literacy Pilot project: Building Strong Foundations, as well as every school identifying a key raising priority in their improvement plan for 21-22, based upon their own attainment data. A Head Teacher Development Day in May 2021 outlined the need for a relentless focus on raising attainment and developed Head Teachers' skills in identifying their gaps with robust use of data.

- Stemming from the Raising Attainment Strategy work and linked to the overall Raising Attainment Strategy, a working group is being established to take forward a Literacy Strategy in session 2021-22.
- In response to the Alternative Certification Model for NQ21, all schools were involved in identifying consistent approaches to assessment and quality assurance and moderation. Aspects of these practices will continue next session to support high quality consistent professional understanding of national qualification standards. A new East Lothian Council Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) group was re-established in March 2020 and a QAMSO improvement plan for 20-21 was identified. Many of these priorities were paused as a result of COVID school closures, but will be taken forward in Session 21-22. This includes a series of virtual national training opportunities led by Education Scotland and in partnership with SEIC, Midlothian and Scottish Borders representatives beginning in September 2021. This opportunity is open to established QAMSOs and all classroom probationers across ELC schools.
- The Education Service developed further Remote Learning Guidance to schools based upon the experiences of learners during the first lockdown. This guidance to schools provided clarity in terms of vision and expectation in relation to improvements in the quality of the remote learning experience during the second lockdown. Practitioners were also supported by our SEIC Digital Lead in areas of professional development required to enhance the remote learning experience. Evaluation data showed an increase in pupil engagement and the variety of approaches used by schools through digital and remote learning means. This included examples of live teaching, recorded lessons and feedback to pupils on next steps in learning.
- The combined Attendance and Home Education Policy has been drafted and finalised, and is now ready for consultation with stakeholders in 2021-22.
- The Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy is being reviewed to take into consideration the positive impact of COVID upon digital learning and practitioner professional learning. We have currently reviewed version one of the strategy document which in its updated format addresses 4 priorities within the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy. These are;



- Infrastructure
- Professional Learning
- Learning and Teaching
- Digital Distance Learning

A range of partners have been involved in the update of this document from QIOs to IT officers, ASN teams and Early Years staff with a further aim being to involve school staff and children in the finalising of the document. Feedback on how this may be impact and be rolled out across all East Lothian schools is paramount to the success of embedding the strategy across East Lothian. Through the updating of the document we have also strengthened a range of partnerships with external providers for East Lothian and we will ensure that the Strategy is a sustainable model that will support all schools in their digital journey. It is also essential that this is embedded within an overall Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

There has been a huge upskill of all Instrumental Music Instructors to ensure successful digital delivery to maximise opportunities for our young people. Training sessions delivered by the Music Education Partnership Group for staff and sharing of best practice was regularly encouraged and undertaken at both local and national levels.

## PRIORITY 2 : Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion (GIRFEC)

### **In Session 2020/21 we aimed to:**

- Finalise and launch our new combined Attendance and Home Education Policy and develop new approaches that increases all children and young people's attendance and engagement at school. Review our approaches to home education and update our policy to reflect Scottish Government guidance and best practice.
- Continue to focus on improving the attainment and achievement of looked after children and young people.
- Continue to support our looked after children and young people to achieve by implementing the Corporate Parenting Plan.
- Review and improve the Health & Wellbeing and Personal and Social Education curriculum frameworks and approaches used in our schools.
- Refresh our focus on the principles of GIRFEC by implementing new Child's Planning Guidance and training and re-establishing a GIRFEC implementation group to drive improvements in multi-agency collaboration and early and effective intervention.
- Continue to promote and develop the use of nurturing approaches in school and ELCC settings through professional development sessions, nurture network and school improvement activities
- Continue to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people through the actions identified in the CSP including: development of the ELC wellbeing academy; roll out of the building resilience programme and the implement school counselling service for children over the age of 10-years.
- Finalise the Inclusion Policy and provide appropriate professional development opportunities that will allow schools to provide high quality, inclusive learning environments.
- Consider and take forward the recommendations from the national ASL review by establishing a ASL forum involving parents and children/young people.
- Review the deployment of Classroom and ASN Auxiliaries to take into account the recommendations from the Education Endowment Fund (2018)

- Review the location, suitability, condition and resources of our specialist provisions to ensure they meet the needs of our growing population and changing needs of children and young people.

## Evaluation of Progress

- The draft Attendance and Home Education Policy that includes updated guidance on home education and flexi-schooling has been completed. This document has been distributed for consultation in Aug 21 and presented to Education Committee in November 21 for approval. The policy includes a new tracking and monitoring process for schools that will allow earlier identification and intervention to support children, young people and families to attend and engage in school.
- We have improved support for the wellbeing, learning and attainment of our care experienced young people through an increased collaboration with Children's Services and the development and professional learning of a new network of Designated Managers for care experience in every school leading to increased inclusion and opportunities for care experienced young people to ensure good progress in their learning and attainment.
- Care experienced young people's voice has been increased through opportunities for self-directed support in relation to learning and through further development of younger Champs Groups in partnership with Who Cares Scotland.
- Alternative education programmes have been created with a small number care experienced young people who have been disengaged from mainstream school. Almost all of these young people have achieved national qualifications, which have enabled them to move forward into positive destinations.
- We have refreshed and updated our Child's Planning Framework guidance and documentation. Professional learning activities have taken place and a Learn Pro module has been developed with an associated expectation that all staff understand their responsibilities in meeting the needs of children and young people.
- We have re-established the multi-agency GIRFEC implementation group comprising key partners from social work, health and communities. The focus on this group next session will be developing a measurement framework to demonstrate impact.
- We have continued to support schools to develop nurturing pedagogy and relational approaches through the delivery of a range of professional learning opportunities including Learn Pro modules, nurture network and conferences. The continued focus on nurture as a key tenet of recovery from COVID is visible across schools and commented on positively by a range of stakeholders. This was evidenced through evaluation of Career Long Professional Learning and the increase in nurturing approaches in place across schools.

- A school-based counselling service is now in place for children aged 10 and above. This service is delivered by MYPAS and to date 140 children and young people, across all schools, have been accepted for support. Remote drop in sessions are in place.
- The majority of primary schools are using the Building Resilience Programme to support the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. We expect that all schools will be using this by the end of Session 21/22. We continue to support this programme through providing professional learning opportunities and networking.
- A Mental Health Youth Work team is in place and is working closely with schools and colleagues to deliver a range of interventions and projects. The youth workers are linked to an associated school group and aim to:
  - raise awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing and the importance of prevention and early intervention
  - support whole school policy and practice in schools to build capacity in pupils and staff to manage mental health and wellbeing concerns
  - coordinate and signpost pupils and staff to relevant support
  - deliver targeted interventions to pupils requiring additional support for anxiety (e.g. Low Intensity Anxiety Management (LIAM)), resilience (e.g. Blooms resilience group work) and bereavement (e.g. Seasons for Growth).
- A one door, single point of access is now in place to accept requests for assistance from professionals who have concerns about a child or young person's mental health and wellbeing. To date, 407 requests have been made to the Single Point of Access with associated advice and support provided. Interventions and services accessed in this way include school counselling, LIAM, NHS art therapies, or support from a mental health youth worker, which is adapted to meet individual needs. Within the next few weeks, sessions with school staff and GPs to increase understanding of this new process, the services involved and how best to access them.
- The Inclusion Policy and Accessibility Strategy was approved by Education Committee in November 2020. A multi-agency working group has been established to take forward the actions within the strategy. Professional learning opportunities have been provided with an associated expectation that 90% of children and young people can have their needs met within their catchment school.

### **PRIORITY 3 - Employability**

#### **In Session 2020/21 we aimed to:**

- Develop a new ELC 'Workforce for the Future Strategy', to enable recovery following COVID19 and support 16-24 year olds who are at risk of unemployment, at the end of the UK Government's Furlough Scheme. This will include access to the UK Government Kickstart (KS) scheme and The Scottish Government No-One Left Behind (NOLB) Employability Strategy. The strategy includes The Young Person's Guarantee (YPG), No-one Left Behind (NOLB) and The Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) grant funding.
- Develop integrated interventions and programmes, using a family centred approach through PESF (Parental Employability Support Fund) /DESF (Disability Employability Support Fund (in partnership with schools, ASN, Education, Community Learning Development and Children's Services) to ensure that our most vulnerable families are supported to achieve. This will include Growing Together (GT), Prevocational Training (PT), Mission Ambition (MA), as well as literacy and numeracy support.
- Be responsive to Labour Market Analysis and work with partners to create sustainable pathways, including new courses by Edinburgh College and The Ridge (e.g. Winter Leavers, Dual Qualifications in Care).
- Continue to build Foundation Apprenticeship frameworks, in line with labour market intelligence and our young people's needs.
- Continue to support increased access to vocational training and qualifications, through curriculum review, in partnership with schools. This will include the development of Design, Construct and Engineer (DEC) qualifications in two pilot secondary schools, maintenance of the School to College Partnership (DYW).
- Develop programmes for Phase 2 of NOLB, the devolvement of Employability Fund (EF) and Community Jobs Scotland (CJS), to Local Authorities.
- Create a NOLB Paid Work Experience programme, specifically for individuals at Stage 1/2 of the Strategic Skills Pipeline (SSP)- including school leavers.
- Expand the DYW links between local employers and schools, to continue to improve positive destinations and enhance the quality of vocational options offered. This will include the appointment of 3 DYW Co-ordinators.

- Continue to support schools to increase sustained positive destinations and participation measures, utilising partnership support and ongoing monitoring of 'unknown' destinations.
- Support post-school employability - European Social Fund (ESF): Pipeline to Employment - support for participants with multiple barriers to employment who are far from the labour market & require intensive support: key worker support; core skills, basic ICT & ESOL; intensive package of personal & social development; work based training; work placements; vocational skills training; job search & brokerage; and a wage subsidy scheme.
- Utilise the Challenge Fund - Grant funding scheme for 3rd sector organisations. Projects fit the 5-stage employability pipeline & complement existing provision. Targeting: unemployed males over 50 years old; criminal justice background; mental health issues; long term unemployed (both male & female); and care experienced.

## Evaluation of Progress

- ELW has developed the draft 'Workforce for the Future', which has been endorsed by CMT and has been updated to include greater connection to and emphasis on:
  - Health and Social Care Plan.
  - LAC, Care Leavers and Corporate Parenting.
  - The Council's Workforce Development Plan

ELW is now putting in place 30 apprenticeship, internships and traineeships across ELC. These posts need to be recruited to before March 2022.

ELW was successful in bidding for the KickStart contract and we became both a Gateway Organisation and an Employer. This contract awarded 55 fully funded places.
- During the information gathering phase of the ELW Service Review, it became evident that resources needed to be re-aligned to the updated national priorities. It also became clear, as we moved into the COVID 19 pandemic that a more flexible, collaborative staffing structure, with additional capacity, would be required for us to be able to work at pace. Guidance pertaining to NOLB promoted a single team and partnership approach. Performance data also suggested that we required additional post school Employability programmes and that the existing Adult Learning

Programme was not producing sufficient Employability outcomes. Regional Literacy and Numeracy attainment was also a priority area for improvement and research from Glasgow College and The University of Strathclyde promoted a family centred approach to raising attainment. As a result the following teams have been established:

1. **School** (NOLB (Steps to Employment), DYW, Foundation Apprenticeships, Transitions, Work Experience, ESOL for Schools, Leaver Programs and Transition support, School to College Partnership, Jobs Kingdom Live, Disability Support, Vocational Skills College, bespoke offers)
  2. **Post-School** (ESOL, Adult Literacy and Numeracy, Skills for Work, Syrian Refugee Program , Paid Work Experience, Adult Certification and Skills Development Courses)
  3. **Family Learning** (Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF), Literacy and Numeracy Support, Family Learning, Disability Employability Support Fund (DESF), Oxford Program, Mission Ambition, Growing Together, Parental Employability Support: with a focus on in-work poverty and unemployment)
  4. **Funding, Compliance, Customer Services and Data** (Procurement, Community Benefits, Customer Services, Business Engagement, Online Presence and Social Media, Stakeholder feedback, Data Analysis, Grants)
- Education Support Officers in Literacy and Numeracy have been appointed to lead innovative approaches to Family Learning, in collaboration with Children's Services, with a view to improving attainment and educational outcomes (monitoring and evaluating using data). This will involve working with Employability colleagues on projects that will deliver the Key performance Indicators detailed within PESF. This involves projects that will improve the following outcomes for parents:
    1. The individual's participation has increased their hourly or annual wage
    2. Achievement of a qualification or certification
    3. Achievement of Employment, Self-Employment or Sustained Employment
    4. Progression along the Strategic Skills Pipeline
  - ELW offers an extensive School to College Partnership (SCP) programme and our portfolio of Foundation Apprenticeships were developed in line with labour market intelligence for the region. In 2020-21 we offered 47 SCP courses that were taken up by 232 pupils. 185 pupils completed the courses (80%) and 47 pupils were withdrawn with agreement between the home school and Edinburgh College (20%). Currently we have 140 pupils enrolled in 39 courses.

- ELW currently has 50 Foundation Apprentices, which is an increase from the 2019-20 figure of 43. Attainment/completion on these courses. All 12 Foundation Apprentices from the 2019-20 who were studying Scientific Technologies successfully completed their courses.
- Musselburgh Grammar School and Ross High School are the IRES City Deal Pilot Schools for Design Engineer Construct. A review of the regional Technologies Curriculum, was undertaken through engagement between Education Scotland and Faculty Leads. It was agreed that curriculum pathways and skills development would become better aligned to the college curriculum entry points (Engineering, DEC and Trades). A significant investment of £330,000 per year, over a period of 5 years (£1.5 million) is being invested by East Lothian Council (through the approved Capital Budget) into curriculum resources, to modernise the curriculum and raise attainment. We are in year 3 of this funding.
- ELW has a strong relationship with The Ridge, who are training our pupils in Stonemasonry and Construction. Schools refer appropriate S3 (level 4 units in Construction Crafts) and S4-S6 (Level 5 Construction Crafts). We also have a Rural Skills S4-6 Level 4 cohort. Entry to the courses are based upon competitive interviews, involving staff from ELW, The Ridge and Schools. Care Experienced pupils are prioritised. We are also preparing to deliver multi-skilled trade qualifications in partnership with the Building Engineering Services Association (BESA), at the new Wallyford Learning Campus. In addition to this we are developing rural skills qualifications on this site with the support of the Scottish Rural College (SRUC) and Morrison's Construction, through the Hub Social Value Contract.
- ELW has implemented Phase 1 of the adult phase of NOLB, through the creation of a dedicated team and the creation single point of triage referral. We have also updated our website and improved our customer facing online presence, as part of COVID19 recovery and in preparation for the end of furlough. In addition 'Steps to Employment' has been implemented, as a targeted paid work experience program.
- ELW has two fully funded staff in post to deliver Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE), which provides support for vulnerable businesses and those at risk of redundancy.
- As a result of the ELW Service Review the Local Employability Partnership Group (LEP) was re-established. A Transitions Task Force (TTF) (made up of ELW, SDS, DWP and Edinburgh College) was formed as a subgroup of the LEP, as it was recognised that existing processes could be improved to better meet the needs of vulnerable cohorts and those at most at risk of disengagement. The LEP will become the decision making group for NOLB phase 2. Our initial Positive Destinations Report (SLDR), prior to the pandemic was 95.8% (2018-19). For the 2019-20 cohort the initial snapshot result was 92.5% (below the National Average of 93.3%), as a result of COVID19. The follow up report, after all individuals were tracked and supported into positive destinations by the Partnership Transitions Task Force, was 93.5%, which placed us 10<sup>th</sup> out of 32 local authorities (LAs) and above the national average. We have guaranteed every school leaver a nominated key worker, in partnership with SDS, to track and support young people to the age of 19.



- Our Participation Measure (the statistic which records positive destinations 3 years after the school leave date) is currently 94% (August 2021) and 5<sup>th</sup> out of 32 local authorities. . Prior to the pandemic, we had reached a peak of 95.8% and recovery to this point and then continued improvement becomes our target. The Participation Measure tracks the current status of 16-19 year olds. ELW and SDS have identified and allocated a key worker to all leavers and will support them until the age of 19, regardless of their status (red, amber, green).
- Under the previous ELW structure The 'Transitions Team' in 2019/20 had 23 young people under the age of 20 years and 7 young people over the age of 20 years receiving a service. Since March 2021, until September 2021 (under the new NOLB Team structure) there have been 23 engagements for individuals under the age of 20 years and 11 engagements for those over the age of 20 years.

## PRIORITY 4 - Leadership

In Session 2020/21 we aimed to:

- Improve the quality and impact of strategic leadership and leadership development at other levels within our schools.
- Build on and further develop a collaborative culture across Education and Children’s Services.

## Evaluation of Progress

- We have continued to strengthen leadership capacity across the education service through targeted Quality Improvement engagement, staff development opportunities, development days and working groups. As a result, we have been able to demonstrate an overall improvement in the quality of leadership.

	Primary 2021 Actual				Primary 2022 Target			
QI	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1.3	12	18	3	1	9	20	4	1
2.3	12	18	3	0	10	20	4	0
3.2	19	13	1	0	17	15	2	0
	Secondary 2021 Actual				Secondary 2022 Target			
	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1.3	0	4	2	0	0	4	2	0
2.3	0	5	1	0	0	4	2	0
3.2	0	5	1	0	0	5	1	0

- We have continued the development and support of our teams through more frequent team meetings and communication. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented new opportunities for our teams to engage differently using Skype and MSTeams and this has resulted in more frequent and focussed team meetings.
- We have continued to develop a programme of joint professional learning for senior leaders across Education and Children's Services. Whilst our progress has been slower in this area, this will continue to be a shared priority in 2021/22.
- Through our self-improving schools work, we have continued to embed a highly effective collaborative culture throughout our learning communities and build effective networks within and outwith the authority. Schools are increasingly working together in Associated School Groups and School Team Groups to support improvement and an increasing number of schools and practitioners have engaged in the work of the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC).

## 5. Finance and Resources

### **In Session 2020/21 we aimed to:**

- Develop and maintain a school estate strategy.
- Develop a Workforce Strategy that ensures the service can meet the needs of the community now and in the future.
- Continue to deliver an efficient and effective service within the principles of Best Value at a time of diminishing resources and growing demand.

## Evaluation of Progress

- We have continued with our review of the Learning estate with Phase 1 which included an online survey completed in the first half of 2021. Phase 2 of the review, (informal community consultation sessions) is scheduled for October 2021.
- A new Learning Estate Senior Managers' group was formed that reviews progress with the Learning Estate on a fortnightly basis.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on construction work in East Lothian. Whilst work did stop during both lockdowns, work has resumed and we have recently completed the largest programme of summer works designed to improve aspects of the condition and suitability of the estate. In addition, due to continued population growth, we are in the process of extending 17 schools and establishing 5 new build schools across the county.
- Plans to extend and develop our early learning and childcare facilities to meet the needs of our families and to support the expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours are almost complete.
- We have begun to review our Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme as part of the review being undertaken by the Scottish Government. We have established a working group that will focus on reviewing approaches to ASN funding including predictable and exceptional needs funding to ensure children's needs are better met.
- Of particular note is the success of the Instrumental Music Service which maintained provision in all current ELC schools throughout the school session, offering weekly lessons for 857 pupils. Throughout the session it once again expanded to offer instrumental provision in **all** ELC schools and promote equitable access to music making. Currently c1000 registrations have been received for session 2021/22 and there requires now to be planning around the implications of no charging for 1 year as announced by Scottish Government.

The IMS remained committed to improving outcomes for learners and raising attainment through PEF Funded Musician in Residence Schemes – Pilots at Windygoul PS and Dunbar PS - Working with QIOs and school teams to address the gender based attainment gap, poverty related attainment gap and assist with curriculum transitions. A targeted intervention for 35-40 identified pupils in each school will be part of our new ensembles with a focus on pupils in deciles 1&2.

There has been collaboration with the Youth Music Initiative to encourage equitable access to Instrumental Tuition and for those who would not normally engage in instrumental music to enjoy the benefits – RHS Pilot with Oi Musica – 48 identified pupils will form the RHS Street Band in the new school session.

Community links will be further developed with local performances, connections with care homes and local organisations through local amateur music groups and the charity Together with Music.

## Continued impact of COVID-19 and implications for improvement planning 2021/22

Whilst Education has continued to progress key areas of development during session 2020/21, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the delivery of key improvement priorities for the service. In addition, the impact of COVID-19 on children, young people, families and communities is not yet fully known. We remain, however ambitious for our children and young people which is reflected in the improvement priorities below.

The remainder of this document, takes account of the progress to date, the impact of COVID-19 and sets out the key priorities for the service for session 2021/22.

Priority	High Level Actions	Lead Person Timescale	2020-21 Baseline Measure	Expected impact and measurable outcomes for learners
<b>PRIORITY 1</b>  <b>A Relentless Focus on Raising Attainment</b>  <b>Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap</b>	<p><b>1.1</b> Improve attainment within the broad general education stages, by implementing the Raising Attainment Strategy</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Improve attainment within the senior phase by maximising opportunities through curriculum planning, consortium arrangements and partnership delivery</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Identify and reduce the attainment gap between the most and least deprived children</p> <p><b>1.4</b> Continue to focus on improving the attainment and</p>	<p>Quality Improvement Team</p> <p>By June 2022</p>	<p>2020-21 Levels of Attainment (P1, P4, P7):</p> <p><b>Boys' Level of Attainment / Girls – Boys % gap P1, P4, P7</b>            Reading: 67.0% / 6.1%            Writing: 55.1% / 11.2%            Talking and Listening: 75.6% / 9.1%            Literacy: 52.2% / 11.6%            Numeracy: 66.7% / -1.3%</p> <p><b>Boys' Level of Attainment / Girls – Boys % gap S3 Third Level 2018-19</b>            Reading: 86.2% / 5.3%            Writing: 84.0% / 6.7%            Talking and Listening: 87.7% / 4.2%            Literacy: 81.8% / 7.0%            Numeracy: 89.5% / 1.7%</p> <p><b>Boys' Level of Attainment / Girls – Boys % gap S3 Fourth Level 2018-19</b>            Reading: 45.4% / 15.5%</p>	<p>Raise boys' level of attainment by 2% per annum to continue to close the gender attainment gap</p> <p>Raise levels of writing attainment in P1, P4, P7, S3 by 2% per annum in line with stretch aim of 85%</p> <p>Raise levels of attainment in Primary 1 by 2% per annum in line with stretch aim of 85%</p>

	<p>achievement of Looked After children and young people.</p> <p><b>1.5</b> Continue to support our looked after children and young people to achieve by implementing the corporate parenting plan.</p>	<p>Virtual Head Teacher By June 2022</p>	<p>Writing: 39.7% / 16.0% Talking and Listening: 46.9% / 6.7% Literacy: 45.4% / 15.5% Numeracy: 61.1% / 3.8%</p> <p><b>Writing Attainment Levels:</b> P1: 64.2% P4: 58.9% P7: 58.9% S3 (2019): 87.1% (Third Level) 47.2% (Fourth Level)</p> <p><b>Primary 1 (Early Level) Attainment Levels:</b> Reading: 72.6% Writing: 64.2% Talking and Listening: 84.0% Literacy: 62.0% Numeracy: 70.6%</p> <p><b>Poverty Related Attainment Gap (Q5-Q1)</b> (P1, P4, P7): Q5-Q1= PRAG (% gap 2020-21) Reading: 29.6% Writing: 32.7% Talking and Listening: 24.0% Literacy: 31.2% Numeracy: 30.4%</p> <p>S3 Q5-Q1=PRAG (% gap 2018-19)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Third Level</th> <th>Fourth Level</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Reading:</td> <td>49.6%</td> <td>45.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing:</td> <td>47.5%</td> <td>47.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Talking and Listening:</td> <td>41.9%</td> <td>56.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Literacy:</td> <td>49.3%</td> <td>45.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Numeracy:</td> <td>46.7%</td> <td>59.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Third Level	Fourth Level	Reading:	49.6%	45.7%	Writing:	47.5%	47.2%	Talking and Listening:	41.9%	56.1%	Literacy:	49.3%	45.7%	Numeracy:	46.7%	59.6%	<p>Reduce the poverty related attainment gap (Q5-Q1) by 2% per annum</p> <p>100% of Education and children’s Services staff are aware of their responsibilities under the Corporate Parenting Plan</p>
	Third Level	Fourth Level																				
Reading:	49.6%	45.7%																				
Writing:	47.5%	47.2%																				
Talking and Listening:	41.9%	56.1%																				
Literacy:	49.3%	45.7%																				
Numeracy:	46.7%	59.6%																				

Priority	High Level Actions	Lead Person Timescale	2020-21 Baseline Measure	Expected impact and measurable outcomes for learners
<b>PRIORITY 2</b>  <b>Getting it Right for Every East Lothian Child</b>  <b>Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion</b>	<b>2.1.</b> Improve the attendance, participation and engagement of all learners and especially those who are living in poverty, are care experienced or have other protected characteristics	Lynne Binnie QIOs June 2022	Attendance LAC/ASN/SIMD  Exclusion   Alternative learning pathways  % of schools evaluated good or above for 3.1	Continued improvement in average pupil attendance % compared to the average for the three previous sessions (2018-2021) = June 2022 average % pupil attendance 92.7% or better.  A 10% reduction in numbers of pupil exclusions compared to the average for the three previous sessions (2018-2021) = June 2022 number of pupil exclusions of 230 or less, with 0% exclusions for care experienced children and young people, and those on the child protection register  All learners have appropriate full time learning pathways  Increase in schools evaluated as 'good' for QI 3.1 to 100%
	<b>2.2.</b> Improve the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people	Lynne Binnie June 2022	% of young people accessing SPA % of referrals to CAMHS  No of bullying incidents recorded on SEEMIS	Children accessing SPA  Reduced referrals to CAHMS  reduce the number of children and young people reporting they experience bullying and/or racist behaviour
	<b>2.3</b> Embed the principles of UNCRC and The Promise across all aspects of the Education Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTs will have a strategic overview of the attendance, attainment and exclusions of care experienced children and young people and support</li> </ul>	Lynne Binnie June 2022	Number of schools signed up to the Rights Respecting School Award  See baseline data above for attendance and exclusion	100% of schools achieving RRS at bronze, silver and gold  See measures above for attendance and exclusion



	<p>schools to ensure they receive all they need to thrive at school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNCRC training programme for staff is rolled out to schools to ensure a clear focus to the teaching of children's rights as part of the curriculum. This will include a specific focus at HT Meetings.</li> <li>• Through training, all Designated Managers, Teachers and school staff will be supported to be aware of the issues facing care experienced pupils so they can best engage and encourage.</li> <li>• All Designated Managers will receive training to ensure language around care experienced children and young people is easily understood, positive and does not create or compound stigma.</li> </ul>			<p>All schools in East Lothian will have a clear understanding of the rights of children and how to uphold them. All children, whatever their educational setting, will learn about their rights in a developmentally appropriate way.</p> <p>All Designated Managers and HTs have and engage actively with the most up to date data around their care experienced learners and have articulated their targeted plans to Quality Improvement Officers. Expected outcomes are contained in Priority 1.</p>
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Priority	High Level Actions	Lead Person Timescale	2020-21 Baseline Measure	Expected impact and measurable outcomes for learners
<p><b>PRIORITY 3</b></p> <p><b>Employability</b></p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Clear communication of the ELC Employability offer.</p> <p><b>3.2</b> Progress the Workforce for the Future plan (attached)</p> <p><b>3.3</b> Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) and Family Learning.</p> <p><b>3.4</b> Implementation of No-one Left Behind Phase 2 (NOLB). Transition Support.</p>	<p>N. Craik-Collins ELW LMT</p> <p>A Hood ELW LMT</p>	<p>SLDR 94.5% Participation Measure 94% PPRC Engagement 28/32 of Scottish LAs 51 negative status (regional) 4 Unknowns (August 2021)</p> <p>32/55 Kickstart Engagements (End December)</p> <p>Incorporated within the Employability targets contained within Workforce for the Future</p> <p>Awaiting confirmation from Scottish Government with regards to Key Performance Measures, funding and associated timeline.</p> <p>Introduction of NPA6 Target of 100 engagements</p>	<p>Stakeholder feedback confirms that there is an understanding of the key performance measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of how many youths/adults have been supported to engage with Council Employability Programs or who have moved into a positive and sustained destinations.</li> <li>• SLDR target 95.5%</li> <li>• Participation Measure 95.5%</li> <li>• PPRC Engagement 25/32 of Scottish LAs</li> <li>• 30 negative status (regional)</li> <li>• 0 Unknowns</li> </ul> <p>100% of ELW, Education and Children’s Services staff are aware of their responsibilities and the opportunities contained within the Employability Service Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Transition to Workforce for the Future- continued support for Kickstart Placements and a target of 30 additional internal opportunities under the Workforce for Future (NOLB, YPG, ESF,PESF)</p> <p>PESF and Family Learning Pilot Projects.</p> <p>New programmes to replace Employability Fund and Community Jobs Scotland provision, utilising localised delivery model.</p>

**3.5** Co-ordination and support for 3-18 Developing Scotland Young Workforce.

- Scientific Technologies NPA 6 Chemistry Pilot Project.
- Development and Support of IRES City Deal Design Engineer Construct pilot projects.
- Development of Social Value Community Agriculture Pilot Project and STEAM Education, in partnership with SRUC, BESA and Morrison's Construction.
- Development of Enterprise programmes.
- Development of Disability Support through Career Education and Work Placement Standards.

**3.6** Development of a pilot Vocational Skills College programme.

Pilot Projects agreed

Develop qualifications and pathways in rural skills, Engineering, Construction and multi-skills trades.

School engagement with new Enterprise qualifications and pathways.

Introduction of supported pathways. Enhancement of a person centred approach.

Introduction of supported pathways and qualifications. Partnership approach towards improving engagement, attendance and attainment. Access to BGE in further education. Greater levels of family engagement.

Improved attainment in Chemistry and increased S6 SVQ uptake in Foundation Apprenticeships.

Improved attainment opportunities within Technologies

Improved attainment and progression for adults and youths. Evidence of multigenerational and community based learning.

Improvement in Enterprise activities and business start-up opportunities.

Improved access to higher levels of progression and attainment. Evidence to suggest greater levels of choice, better matching of needs and equity/quality of access to skilled pathways.

Improved attendance in line with measures above  
Improved attainment in line with measures above

Improved engagement with young people and families  
Improved progression to FE, HE, training and Employment

<p><b>3.7</b> Development of a post school training and upskilling partnership programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of and support for Care Experienced adults (working with Children’s Services)</li> </ul>	<p>ELW LMT Post School and Family Learning Teams</p> <p>Local Employability Partnership.</p>	<p>Introduction of supported pathways and qualifications. Partnership approach towards improving engagement. Courses will be aligned to LMI, regional skills assessments and relevant data provided by partners such as DWP.</p> <p>Actual      463 (2018/19)                   554 (2019/20)                   557 (2020/21)</p>	<p>EDU 03 ‘number of people participating in ELW operated or funded employability programmes:</p> <p>Target      600</p>
<p><b>3.8</b> Progress the implementation of no-one Left Behind (NOLB)</p> <p>Developing a range of innovative qualifications pathways in partnership with the IRES City Deal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder Engagement and feedback</li> <li>• Impact Dashboards</li> <li>• Data Analysis</li> <li>• Online Presence</li> <li>• CBIP and Social Value</li> <li>• Procurement Framework</li> <li>• Grant Claims</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Single point of referral and triage</li> </ul>	<p>ELW LMT DWY Co-ordinators Schools Team D. Dickson Economic Development</p> <p>N.Craik-Collins ELW LMT Schools Team Edinburgh College SDS Pilot Schools</p> <p>Post School Team</p> <p>Finance, Compliance, Data, Customer Service Team (FCDCS)</p>	<p>EDU01 ‘percentage of people involved in Council operated Employability programs, progressed into employment’:</p> <p>Actual      22.7% (2018/19)                   14.4% (2019/20)                   21.18% (2020/21)</p>	<p>EDU01 ‘percentage of people involved in Council operated Employability programs, progressed into employment’:</p> <p>Target      23%</p> <p>Ranking     28/32 LAs</p>

Priority	High Level Actions	Lead Person Timescale	2020-21 Baseline Measure	Expected impact and measurable outcomes for learners
<p><b>PRIORITY 4</b></p> <p><b>Finance and Resources</b></p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Develop and maintain a school estate strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop the learning estate strategy and improvement plan through a pre-consultation during 2021 that will seek to gather the views of East Lothian stakeholders</li> </ul> <p><b>4.2</b> Continue to deliver a Best Value efficient and effective service at a time of diminishing resources and growing demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the removal of charging for the Instrumental Music Service</li> <li>Implement the removal of charging for curriculum resources</li> <li>Continue to progress and finalise the DSM review and the approaches to funding ASN in our schools.</li> </ul>	<p>Neil Craik-Collins By November 2021</p> <p>Richard Parker Jonathan Gawn By October 2021</p> <p>Richard Parker Bev Skirrow By October 2021</p> <p>Richard Parker Session 2021/22</p>	<p>We currently have 11 schools with Condition rating C and 14 schools with Suitability rating C.</p> <p>Government Funding allocated: 21/22 Allocation £71,000 22/23 Allocation £35,000</p> <p>Government funding allocated: 21/22 Allocation £85,000 22/23 Allocation £42,000</p>	<p>The creation of a strategic Learning Estate Improvement Plan, which will address the existing context and place all schools into a Condition and Suitability rating of B+.</p> <p>None of the 1324 young people engaged in our Instrumental Music Service will be charged to participate in the service</p> <p>No young person in East Lothian is charged to participate in any of the 8 CfE curriculum areas</p>

## Glossary

<b>ASG</b>	Associated Schools Group	<b>GIRFEC</b>	Getting it Right for Every Child
<b>ASL</b>	Additional Support for Learning	<b>HWB</b>	Health and Wellbeing
<b>BGE</b>	Broad General Education	<b>NOLB</b>	No-One Left Behind
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	<b>PEF</b>	Pupil Equity Funding
<b>CFE</b>	Curriculum for Excellence	<b>PESF</b>	Parental Employability Support Fund
<b>CLPL</b>	Career Long Professional Learning	<b>PSE</b>	Personal and Social Education
<b>DESF</b>	Disability Employability Support Fund	<b>QAMSO</b>	Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer
<b>DSM</b>	Devolved School Management	<b>QIO</b>	Quality Improvement Officer
<b>DYW</b>	Developing the Young Workforce	<b>SDS</b>	Skills Development Scotland
<b>EAL</b>	English as an Additional Language	<b>SEIC</b>	South East Improvement Collaborative
<b>ELCC</b>	Early Learning and Childcare	<b>SIMD</b>	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
<b>ELW</b>	East Lothian Works	<b>STEAM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths
<b>EPS</b>	Educational Psychology Service	<b>UNCRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>ESOL</b>	English for Speakers of Other Languages		

## Appendix 1

### Background Information: Our service and teams

#### **East Lothian Council's Education Service has the following responsibilities:**

- Curriculum, Qualifications and Assessment
- Early Learning and Childcare
- Education Management and Review
- Quality Improvement and Service Planning
- Schools Services Support
- Specialist Music Service
- Physical Activity and Outdoor Learning
- Additional Support Needs and Education Psychology Services
- East Lothian Works

<b>Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC)</b>	<p>Delivers the statutory duty to provide ELCC to eligible 2 year olds and children from the term after their third birthday. In East Lothian this is provided through provision in :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33 early learning and childcare centres within primary schools</li> <li>• 40 funded providers (16 private nurseries, 23 childminders and 1 playgroup)</li> </ul> <p>Additional early learning and childcare is provided through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playgroups of which there are 14 in East Lothian. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Tots and Teens Playgroups.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>School Years</b>	<p>Delivers the statutory duty to provide primary and secondary education through provision in 34 primary schools and 6 secondary schools</p>

<b>Additional Support Needs</b>	<p>Delivers the statutory duty to ensure additional support needs are met through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inclusive practices and support in all schools;</li> <li>• specialist provision in 3 mainstream primary schools and 3 mainstream secondary schools; and</li> <li>• specialist professionals supporting children and young people who require additional support.</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Improvement Team</b>	<p>Delivers the following services to fulfil the duties set out in statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support and challenge of schools to improve the quality of education;</li> <li>• support for quality assurance and self-evaluation;</li> <li>• support for the development of the curriculum and learning, teaching and assessment;</li> <li>• liaison with national and local organisations and bodies; and</li> <li>• development of local policy, including policy informed by National Policy, relating to education.</li> </ul>



<b>Educational Psychology Service (EPS)</b>	<p>The EPS service delivers the following service making use of sound research evidence to support teaching and the overall wellbeing for children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consultation • assessment</li> <li>• intervention</li> <li>• training</li> <li>• research</li> </ul>
<b>Education Business Support Team</b>	<p>Delivers the following services, including those required to fulfil duties set out in statute:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategic resource planning;</li> <li>• strategic planning and delivery of career long professional learning;</li> <li>• leadership development;</li> <li>• support for newly qualified teachers, student teachers and supply teachers;</li> <li>• recruitment of education service staff;</li> <li>• national and local policy relating to education;</li> <li>• support for the use of assistive technologies;</li> <li>• development of the Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy;</li> <li>• support for financial stewardship in all schools;</li> <li>• the use of technology to enhance learning and teaching, online services and learning portals;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specialist music and drama provision;</li> <li>• physical activity and education;</li> <li>• data analysis and performance;</li> <li>• pupil placement and admissions;</li> <li>• school estate projection planning;</li> <li>• staffing allocations;</li> <li>• scheme of devolved school management;</li> <li>• Improved employee relations through collaborative working with Trades Unions.</li> </ul>

**East Lothian Works**

East Lothian Works, East Lothian's employability hub, brings together all employability-related services under the East Lothian *One Council Approach*. East Lothian Works is the central point of contact for employment advice, training and skills development, working in partnership with a number of external partners including Queen Margaret University, Napier University, The Edinburgh College, Skills Development Scotland and Job Centre Plus. Its main focus is an employability support and intervention service.



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**REPORT TO:** Education Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 23 November 2021

**BY:** Executive Director for Education & Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Policy: Included, Engaged & Involved - A Positive Approach to Promoting School Attendance

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To seek Committee's approval of the draft attendance policy: 'Included, Engaged and Involved: A Positive Approach to Promoting School Attendance' (Appendix 1).

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- i. Approve the Draft Attendance Policy: Included, Engaged & Involved: A Positive Approach to Promoting School Attendance (Appendix 1).
  - ii. Note specifically the guiding principles, legislative context, and procedures for recording and managing school attendance.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 East Lothian Council is committed to providing the best education service in Scotland through a relentless focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All. We aim to ensure East Lothian's children, young people and families are confident and resilient, and fully included as valued contributors within their schools and communities.
- 3.2 Good school attendance is the foundation of our ambition for our children and young people to reach their full potential and is fundamental to Getting it Right for Every Child and raising attainment for all. We recognise that promoting good school attendance can be a complex and multi-faceted issue and, in the production of this policy and associated procedures, a multi-agency approach has been adopted including input from Children's Services and Police Scotland.

- 3.3 The purpose of this new and updated policy is to provide guidance to schools about positive approaches to promoting school attendance, school attendance procedures and alternative attendance arrangements such as short term, temporary part-time timetables, flexi-schooling and home education.
- 3.4 The policy supports school improvement through the inclusion of an attendance self-evaluation toolkit. There are also formalised attendance tracking, monitoring and intervention procedures. The policy outlines updated arrangements for parents who wish to withdraw their children from school for the purposes of flexi-schooling or home education. Guidance to monitor and support alternative attendance arrangements such as hosting and part-time timetables are also included in the policy.
- 3.5 Consultation thus far has included internal Education and Children's Services colleagues. Wider public consultation via East Lothian Council's Consultation Hub will be complete by 17 November 2021. Officers will reflect this feedback in finalising the policy. The Education Service is receiving an increased number of applications for home and flexi-schooling and therefore, if approved, we intend to implement this policy from January 2022.
- 3.6 This policy is designed to ensure a consistent approach across East Lothian, in line with the suite of existing Included, Engaged & Involved policies, previously agreed by Education Committee.
- 3.7 This policy builds on existing good practice in our schools including the use of SEEMiS for recording purposes. It also promotes existing relational approaches such as nurture, restorative practice and early intervention to ensure our schools are welcoming and inclusive. School approaches to creative and innovative curriculum design are also highlighted as effective in meeting the needs of all learners. The policy emphasises the fundamental importance of our GIRFEC Child Planning Framework to support good school attendance.
- 3.8 Once approved, the updated policy will be introduced and implemented within all East Lothian Education settings from January 2022. All partner agencies and colleagues will be informed of the policy and invited to attend awareness raising and engagement sessions.
- 3.9 **Monitoring and Review**
- 3.9.1 East Lothian Council's Inclusion & Wellbeing Service will monitor and review attendance in schools and the implementation of this updated policy.
- 3.9.2 SEEMiS will provide information and data regarding attendance and will allow outcomes to be measured through our ongoing review process.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This policy takes account of the duties set down by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the Equality Act 2010, the Education Disability Strategies and Pupils Educational Records (Scotland) Act 2002, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (amended 2009; 2017) and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 4.2 This policy is designed to ensure a consistent approach across East Lothian
- 4.3 The implementation of this policy will ensure the local authority complies with legislation and Scottish Government guidance.

#### **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts identified.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial - None
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - There are no changes to SEEMiS recording procedures.

#### **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Included, Engaged and Involved: A Positive Approach to Improving School Attendance DRAFT (Appendix 1).

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<b>DATE</b>	25 October 2021







## Included, Engaged & Involved

### A Positive Approach to Promoting School Attendance

POLICY: September 2021

DRAFT



## Contents

1	Introduction .....	4
1.1	Legislative Context .....	4
1.2	Key Rights, Duties and Principles .....	6
1.3	Impact of Poor Attendance .....	7
1.4	Attendance Tracking and Monitoring .....	8
2	Positive Approaches to Promoting School Attendance .....	10
2.1	Whole School Ethos and Culture .....	11
2.2	Nurturing Schools.....	11
2.3	Parental Engagement .....	13
2.4	Meeting Learners' Needs .....	14
2.5	Curriculum Design .....	15
2.6	Pastoral Care .....	15
2.7	Self Evaluation.....	16
3	School Attendance Procedures.....	16
3.1	Recording Attendance .....	16
3.2	Definition of Attendance.....	17
3.3	Authorised Absence .....	17
3.4	Children and Young People Unable to Attend School Due to Prolonged Ill Health.....	18
3.5	Diverse School Communities .....	18
3.6	Unauthorised Absence.....	19
3.7	Compulsory Measures .....	20
3.8	Children and Young People Missing from Education.....	20
3.9	Attendance Beyond Statutory School Leaving Age.....	22
4	Alternative Attendance Arrangements.....	23
4.1	Home Education and Flexi-schooling .....	23
4.2	Part-time Timetables .....	26
4.3	Hosting Arrangements .....	27
	Appendix 1: Relevant National Legislation and Guidance .....	29
	Appendix 2: Relevant East Lothian Council Policy and Guidance .....	31
	Appendix 3: Measures for Compulsory Compliance.....	32
	Appendix 4: SEEMiS School Leaving Process .....	36
	Appendix 5: Home Schooling and Flexi-schooling – Parental Request Supporting Information.....	38
	Appendix 6: Attendance Letter (1) - Parents .....	39

Appendix 7: Attendance Letter (1) - Young Person over 12 Years ..... 40  
Appendix 8: Attendance Letter (2) - Parents ..... 41  
Appendix 9: Attendance Letter (2) - Young Person over 12 years..... 42  
Appendix 10: Attendance Letter (3) - Parent..... 43  
Appendix 11: Attendance Letter (3) - Young Person over 12 Years ..... 44  
Appendix 12: School Attendance Self-Evaluation Toolkit..... 45

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# 1 Introduction

East Lothian Council is committed to providing the best education service in Scotland through a relentless focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All. We aim to ensure East Lothian's children, young people and families are confident and resilient, and fully included as valued contributors within their schools and communities.

Good school attendance is the foundation of our ambition for our children and young people to reach their full potential and is fundamental to Getting it Right for Every Child and raising attainment for all. We recognise that promoting good school attendance can be a complex and multi-faceted issue and, in the production of this policy and associated procedures, a multi-agency approach has been adopted including input from Children's Services and Police Scotland.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to schools about positive approaches to promoting school attendance, school attendance procedures and alternative attendance arrangements. Staff in Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC) settings may find this policy useful as an indicator of good practice in the promotion of attendance and the prevention and reduction of absence.

## 1.1 Legislative Context

The Legislative and policy landscape includes, but is not limited to the following:

- *Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: A Positive Approach to the Promotion and Management of Attendance in Scottish Schools (2019)* promotes a relational approach to consider what schools and local authorities can do to promote good attendance and manage absence to ensure all children and young people are included, engaged and involved in their education.
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* recognises education as a key social and cultural right and has a crucial part in the alleviation of poverty and inequality. Article 28 (Access to Education) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to an education. Article 29 (Aims of Education) of the convention states that children's education should help them develop their personalities, talents and abilities. On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 the Scottish Parliament voted to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scottish law.
- *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000* states that it is the "right of every child to be provided with school education by, or by virtue or arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority". The Act also underlines the importance of taking into account the views of children and young people stating that the local authority shall "have due regard...to the views of the child or young person in decisions that significantly affect that child or young person."

- *European Convention on Human Rights – Article 2 of Protocol 1* this convention stresses a child or young person’s right to an education: “No person shall be denied the right to an education.”
- *Education (Scotland) Act 1980* states that it is the duty of parents to provide an education for their child. They can provide that education by sending the child to school or by other means. This is enshrined in Section 30 of this Act which states that it is the “*duty of the parent of every child of school age to provide efficient education ...either by causing him to attend a public school regularly or by other means.*” The Act also states that educational arrangements are “*without prejudice the choice afforded a parent*”. Local authorities also have duties placed on them through the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 which says: “*pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.*” It is therefore incumbent on local authorities to listen to act upon the decisions that parents make about where they wish their child to be educated.
- The *Education (Disability Strategies and Pupil Records) (Scotland) Act 2002* Schools must make reasonable adjustments for the needs of disabled children and schools must not discriminate against disabled children. The Education Authority must prepare and implement an accessibility strategy to increase the access of its disabled pupils to the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, to school buildings and to information.
- The *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004* (and subsequent amendments in 2009 and 2018) outlines the concept of Additional Support Needs and the functions and duties that are placed on education authorities to identify and support those with needs
- The *Equality Act (2010)* simplified and strengthened previous protections for children and young people with ‘protected characteristics’ (e.g. age, race, disability and sexual orientation) from discrimination. This strengthened inclusion in education, including school trips and activities, for all children and young people regardless of their additional support needs or disability.
- The *Curriculum for Excellence* aims to provide a coherent, more flexible curriculum for all children and young people aged 3-18 years. The curriculum comprises the totality of experiences which are planned for children and young people wherever they are being educated. Entitlement includes: a coherent curriculum from 3-18 years; a broad general education until S3; a senior phase after S3 and personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the curriculum and support in moving into a positive and sustained destination beyond school.
- The *Children and Young People Act (2014)* has wide reaching powers to promote the Scottish Government’s aims to encourage effective and targeted services for children and families as well as the promotion of children’s rights. Through the Getting It Right For Every Child National Practice Model, the Act promotes cross-boundary models of service delivery to make best use of expertise and resources in an integrated way with the wellbeing of children and young people being paramount. The wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included) ensures that a holistic approach is taken to ensure the

wellbeing of all children and young people. The Act also introduced increased provision of early learning and childcare and a range of corporate parenting responsibilities to promote the wellbeing of children and young people in care.

- The *National Improvement Framework* for Scottish Education sets out the Scottish Government's vision and priorities for our children's progress in learning. The Framework, part of *the Education (Scotland) Act 2016*, is key in driving work to continually improve Scottish education and close the attainment gap, delivering both excellence and equity.
- *Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2017)* provides guidance on approaches that can be used to prevent the need for exclusion, ensuring all children and young people are Included, Engaged and Involved in their education and summaries the legislative duties placed on Local Authorities regarding exclusion from school.
- The *National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021)* outlines the responsibilities and expectations for all involved in protecting children in Scotland. The Guidance outlines the continuum of support for all children, from universal support through to protection from significant harm, underlining that the wellbeing and safety of children are indivisibly connected. There is a clear articulation of the importance of GIRFEC to protecting children, particularly in recognising that all children must receive the right help at the right time.

Throughout this policy the term parent(s) will be used to apply to anyone with parental responsibility, those providing a foster or residential placement, or the local authority where full parental responsibility rests with them as corporate parents. In the case of care experienced children and young people and those in kinship care, this is also taken to mean 'carer'.

Relevant national and local legislation, policy and guidance can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

## 1.2 Key Rights, Duties and Principles

There are a number of key rights, duties and principles that underpin this policy:

- Every child and young person has a right to be provided with an education and this should enable them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities.
- Parents have a duty to provide education for their child either by ensuring they attend a local authority school, or by making alternative arrangements such as home education or sending their child to an independent school.
- Local Authorities and schools have a duty to provide adequate and efficient education provision in their area. They are also responsible for making special arrangements for a child or young person to receive education elsewhere if this is not possible.

- Children and young people normally engage in the weekly recommended 25 hours for primary and 27.5 hours for secondary.
- Getting it right for every child advocates preventative work and early intervention to support children, young people and their families through the provision of strong universal services, and partnership working with other services when needed. The approach supports children and young people's rights and involves children and young people in any decision that affect them in line with the core principles of UNCRC
- The National Child Protection Guidance 2014 indicates that all agencies that work with children and their families have a shared responsibility for protecting children and promoting, supporting and safeguarding their wellbeing. The importance of promoting good attendance at school is highlighted by concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children who are not at school. Child protection is of paramount importance and absence from school may indicate a child is at risk.
- All children and young people are entitled to support with their learning, where a need is identified, whatever their circumstances. Curriculum for Excellence entitles all children and young people to experience a broad general education during the period from the early years to the end of S3; to experience a senior phase from S4 where they can achieve qualifications; and support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the provision provided.

### 1.3 Impact of Poor Attendance

East Lothian Council recognise the cumulative impact that poor attendance has on a child or young person's learning and wellbeing. Poor attendance has been linked to lower levels of attainment; peer relationships; emotional and behavioural difficulties and poorer employment opportunities. This was found to be the case even when prior attainment and pupil characteristics were taken into account. Some initial studies have indicated that missing 10% of schooling (equivalent of 4 weeks) over the course of a year can impact on attainment.

Low levels of attendance can also be linked to how connected children and young people feel to their school community. Absenteeism can cause children and young people to feel a greater sense of isolation from their peers, teachers and schools which may result in being more socially withdrawn when returning to school (Gottfried, 2015)<sup>1</sup>. Lack of school connectedness has been linked to a range of poorer outcomes including attainment, wellbeing and involvement in offending behaviours.

Attendance and participation with school can also be considered as protective factors for children and young people experiencing adversity or trauma and can support early intervention. For example, attendance at school was found to be a protective factor for children's mental health (Gao et al.,

<sup>1</sup> Gottfried, M. A. (2015). Chronic absenteeism in the classroom context: Effects on achievement. *Urban Education*, 54(1), 3-34.

2015)<sup>2</sup>. While recognising that the links between attendance and these factors are not straightforward, there is still a clear case for demonstrating the importance of promoting good attendance in schools.

**Time in School Lost**

<b>Pupil Attendance</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Weeks</b>
<b>90%</b>	19	3 weeks, 4 days
<b>85%</b>	28.5	5 weeks, 3 ½ days
<b>75%</b>	47.5	9 ½ weeks

## 1.4 Attendance Tracking and Monitoring

East Lothian Council ensures early intervention and support when there are concerns about a child or young person’s school attendance. Attendance tracking and monitoring procedures are shown in Flowchart 1 below.

When a child or young person’s attendance falls below **90% in a four week period** and there are no mitigating factors schools, exercising professional judgement, should instigate a process of intervention and associated supports as outlined in flowchart 1.

If no improvement in attendance takes place over a 16 week period a referral to Children’s Services should be made.

What Support Can Children’s Services Provide?

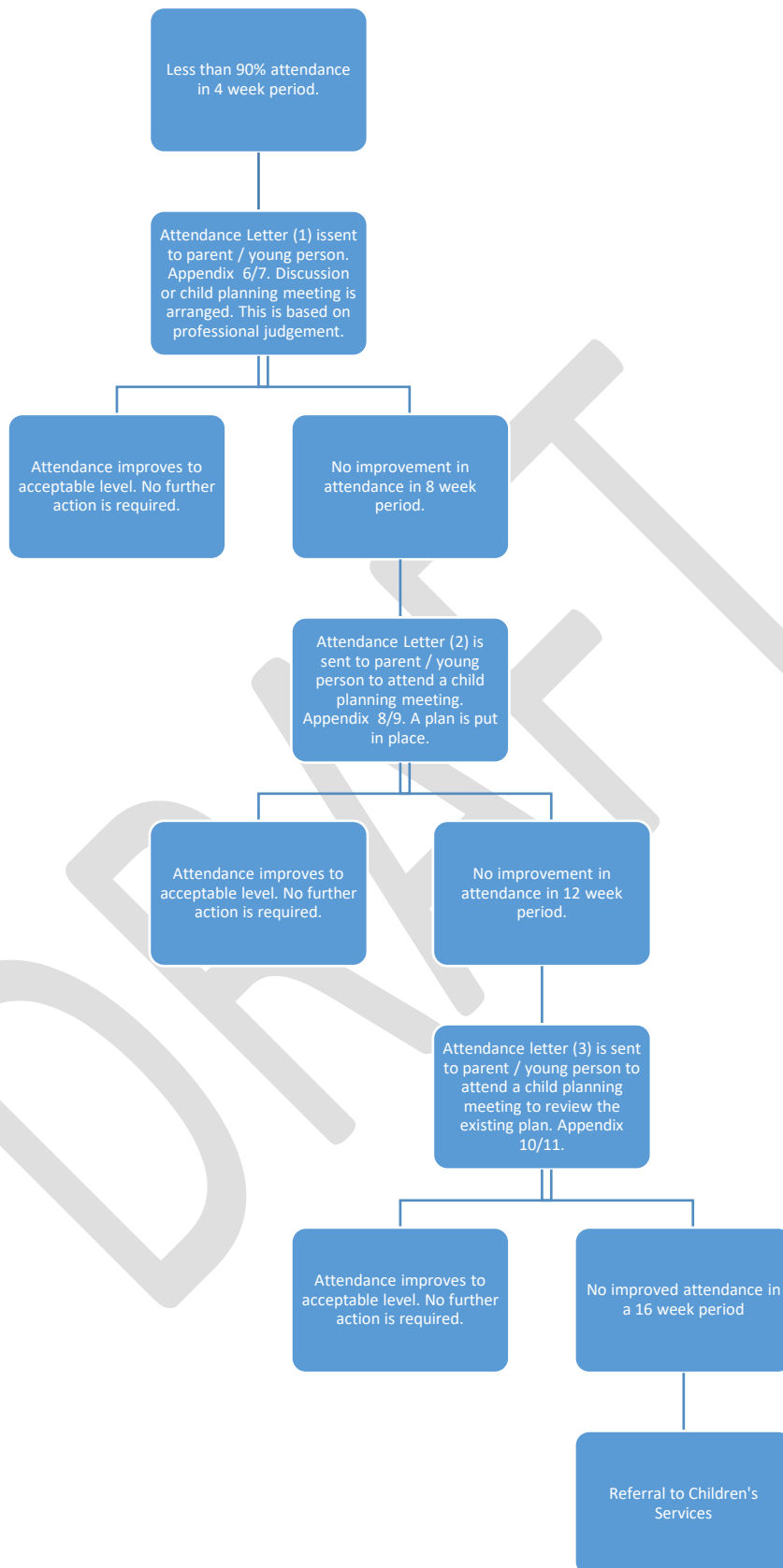
- Where a referral has been appropriately made, children’s services will offer an initial assessment
- Families may be referred or signposted to appropriate support and interventions
- If necessary, a short term piece of work building on the family’s strengths will be carried out
- If children and young people require further support beyond this period, their names will go on a waiting list for longer term social work provision

**Prior to any referral being made to the Children’s Reporter schools must refer to Children’s Services.**

<sup>2</sup> Gao, Q., Li, H., Zou, H., Cross, W., Bian, R., & Liu, Y. (2015). The mental health of children of migrant workers in Beijing: the protective role of public school attendance. *Scandinavian journal of psychology*, 56(4), 384-390.



Flowchart 1: Attendance Procedure



## 2 Positive Approaches to Promoting School Attendance

Children and young people are more likely to be motivated to attend school when they feel fully included and engaged in the wider life of the school. Families are also likely to encourage full attendance where they feel part of the school community and where schools work alongside them as equal partners. Promoting attendance is a multifaceted task that requires schools to promote positive relationships within an inclusive ethos and culture.

The following key principles promote effective whole school approaches to ensuring good attendance:

- Welcoming educational establishments which prioritise positive and nurturing relationships underpinned by high expectations and core values
- Children and young people are fully included and engaged in the life of the school and understand that school absence affects attainment, achievement, wellbeing and wider outcomes
- Schools understand what barriers can be in place for children and young people's attendance, and work hard to remove these
- Schools have additional supports and strategies in place for children and young people who have additional support needs and/or are care experienced
- Promoting attendance is part of regular conversations with parents and children and young people and there is a common understanding that school absence affects attainment, achievement, wellbeing and wider outcomes
- Schools work collaboratively with families and partners to understand and remove any barriers to attendance for individual children and young people and intervene early to any emerging patterns of non-attendance
- Schools have in place clear procedures for monitoring the attendance of all children and young people
- Schools have clear and consistently applied measures for following up on unexplained absence and staff understand absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping learners safe

## 2.1 Whole School Ethos and Culture

A culture where children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure, where their achievements and contributions are valued and celebrated is essential to the development of good relationships. In order to create this environment for effective learning and teaching there should be a shared understanding of wellbeing underpinned by Children's Rights and a focus on positive relationships across the whole school community.

Climate and ethos are key determinants in promoting social and emotional wellbeing and positive mental health for everyone within the school community. The implementation of social and emotional programmes and initiatives as a whole school, with a universal approach can have a significant impact on school ethos and culture which can in turn impact positively on both school attainment and attendance. School attendance issues cannot easily be separated from the relationships, behaviours and wellbeing of the pupils and wider school community and it is important that schools view the promotion of attendance in this context.

There are a range of strategies, programmes and approaches which schools can and do use to improve relationships and behaviour and subsequently attendance. These include relationship based whole school approaches such as solution oriented approaches, restorative approaches and rights based learning. Schools have also found that the implementation of nurturing approaches based on nurturing principles, including nurture groups can improve the overall ethos and culture of a school and support pupils to feel more connected and engaged. Schools are increasingly recognising the impact that early adversity or trauma can have on children and young people and their families and are adapting their approaches to offer more nurturing and trauma informed supports which can help children and young people feel more included within their school environment.

The development of an anti-bullying approach is also a helpful contributor in preventing absence as it has been found that some children and young people's attendance can be impacted upon by bullying.

A rights based approach which takes account of the UNCRC and encourages children and young people's participation in their learning is also likely to ensure children are included, engaged and involved in their school and community, and therefore more likely to be motivated to attend.

## 2.2 Nurturing Schools

Nurturing approaches are underpinned by an understanding of attachment theory, which recognises the importance of early experiences in shaping children's social, emotional and cognitive development (Golding et al, 2016). When children and young people experience consistent safety, security and comfort from key adults, they develop the skills and desire to explore their environment and engage in learning opportunities.

Children develop cognitive models of how relationships work (called internal working models) based on their earliest attachment experiences. Internal working models guide behaviour and development in all future relationships. They help children to evaluate, predict and choose (what they think are) appropriate behaviours based on their previous expectations. These models are not consciously available to the child – the child may not know that this is how they feel about themselves the world and others – but they demonstrate their experience through behaviours.

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*'The basic premise is that behaviour has meaning – whether it is provocative or reactive, or withdrawn and silent. Understanding the communication implicit in behaviour can protect the teacher from being adversely affected by pupil's feelings and defensive patterns, and can thus enhance practice and pupil achievement.'*

*Geddes, 2006*

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Nurture is a broad approach that can be embedded throughout schools to support any child who may be facing a barrier to learning. A child or young person may experience an additional support need at any point, which may arise from a range of factors (disability or health, learning environment, family circumstances or social and emotional factors) and may be temporary or long-lasting. Nurturing schools create positive environments, where the ethos is focused on warmth, empathy and attuned interactions between all staff and pupils. They provide structure alongside consistently high expectations of all learners, recognising that all children can reach their full potential when given the right balance between care and challenge.

Nurture has a strong evidence base for supporting outcomes for children and young people, including:

- Improved skills for learning (Gerrard, 2005)
- Improved language and literacy skills (Hosie, 2013)
- Improved behaviour and social skills (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007)
- Positive changes in social and emotional functioning at home (Binnie & Allen, 2008)

In terms of nurture, early intervention is best for significant gains in social functioning and academic performance (Scott & Lee, 2009), which are maintained over time (O'Connor & Colwell, 2002).

Education Scotland's [Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach](#) provides a key framework to support schools to embed whole school nurture. Through a set of quality indicators and challenge questions, this framework supports schools to self-evaluate all areas of practice (e.g. leadership, learning and teaching, partnership working etc.) using the six nurture principles:



Embedding a nurturing approach can help support children and young people's attendance and engagement and prevent school exclusions. It is fundamental to inclusive practice. It is expected that all schools in East Lothian will move towards becoming Nurturing Schools.

### 2.3 Parental Engagement

East Lothian Council recognises that positive and trusting relationships with parents are key to ensuring good attendance. Parents are key partners in their child's education and it is particularly important that they are aware of their responsibilities and encouraged and supported to enable their child to attend school. Parents have a legal responsibility to provide efficient and suitable education to their child until he or she reaches school leaving age, which they may meet by ensuring that their child attends school regularly ([section 30 of the Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980](#)). Working in partnership with parents will ensure positive and trusting relationships are in place to realise this responsibility and reduce any barriers if they arise.

Parents should be given clear information by the school, updated on a regular basis, regarding their responsibility to inform the school if their child will be absent and provide current emergency contact information.

Schools and settings need to be aware of barriers that parents face in processing information, for example dyslexia and reading difficulties; memory and processing difficulties; living through traumatic situations. In particular, they may find it hard to discuss personal poor mental and physical health circumstances that are impacting upon their child's ability to come to school (either in practical terms or because their child is too worried about their parent to come to school).

In resolving any barriers to attendance, schools, parents and their children should work together to identify the skills, strengths and resources that they already have which can help them to reach a solution to any difficulties which may be hindering attendance. Schools should engage with the wider parent body to help understand any potential barriers within the community. The Parent Council may have a role in supporting this matter.

In discussing attendance with parents staff will maintain a practical focus that recognises the challenges that can be part of family life, such as balancing work commitments; or dealing with financial challenges that may occur. Schools should work with families to ensure that any barriers causing lateness and absence are supported and overcome as early as possible. This is especially the case for care experienced children and young people who can experience changes of placement at short notice.

## 2.4 Meeting Learners' Needs

Schools should recognise and work to mitigate the particular challenges faced by specific groups of children and young people and the risks that these pose to their attendance at school.

The Scottish Government publication *Achieving Excellence and Equity 2021 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan* highlights the difference in attendance rates for particular groups of learners for example in 2018/19:

- The total attendance rate for Scotland was 93%
- The attendance rate was higher for primary schools (94.5%) than secondary schools (90.7%)
- Children and young people living in the 20% most deprived areas has an attendance rate 4.9% lower than pupils living in the 20% least deprived areas
- Children and young people who are looked after had a lower attendance rate (86.8%) than all pupils (93%) with the highest difference in secondary schools

*Support for Learning: All Our Children and All Their Potential 2020* The Scottish Government publication chaired by Angela Morgan also highlights the barriers to attendance around attendance for children and young people with additional support needs: "In terms of attendance and absence, national attendance for all pupils is 94.1% whilst for pupils with additional support needs the national figure is 91.2%."

When identifying and addressing barriers to attendance, schools should also be aware of the particular challenges faced by particular groups of children and young people with protected characteristics, including those with:

- Care Experience
- Additional Support Needs
- Caring responsibilities
- Gypsy / Traveller ethnicity or identity
- Support from Children's services including on the Child Protection Register
- Health Care needs
- Socioeconomic deprivation
- LGBTQ+

East Lothian schools recognise that poor attendance can often be related to, or be an indication of, an additional support need and they will use the Child's Planning Framework to ensure that any barriers to learning are identified and appropriate support is provided in agreeing and maintaining an appropriate pattern of attendance.

## 2.5 Curriculum Design

Curriculum for Excellence promotes creativity and innovation in curriculum design. This includes opportunities for interdisciplinary engagement and active learning, collaboration and partnership in delivering individualised curriculum pathways to meet the needs of all children and young people. Schools must support children and young people's engagement and attendance through offering a coherent 3-18 curriculum that builds skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This should include a range of work based learning and wider achievement and qualifications beyond the SQA menu of choice. Partners from sectors within and out with the local authority should, where possible, support schools in providing packages of support to engage children and young people.

The National strategy 'Developing the Young Workforce' promotes opportunities for career education, work placements and industry experience as part of the formal educational offer. Schools should have in place programmes of learning with vocational and work experience elements in collaboration with partner agencies to ensure young people are fully engaged and involved.

East Lothian works is the dedicated education employability service for East Lothian Council and will support schools to intervene early and ensure that every young person achieves a positive destination upon leaving school.

Educational provision delivered by partners outside school should be overseen by school staff and included in a learner's attendance records in line with the scope of this policy.

## 2.6 Pastoral Care

All staff have a role to play in promoting good attendance and helping to reduce absence from school. Schools will ensure regular access to Continuous Professional Development for all staff around areas such as promoting positive relationships; parental engagement; and learner participation can help schools to develop practice that will support good attendance.

A child or young person's Named Education Contact has a particular role in promoting good attendance and they should:

- Foster positive and trusting relationships with children and young people and their parents to prevent difficulties arising and to ensure difficulties are discussed and resolved when they do take place;
- Respond quickly to absence, to ensure children and young people are safe and well;
- Be aware of early signs or concerns which may cause absence and use the Child's Planning Framework to assess, identify and evaluate appropriate interventions;

- Work to ensure absence does not become a pattern or habit following a specific issue and;
- Support reintegration into learning on returning from absence.

## 2.7 Self-Evaluation

East Lothian schools should have a clear vision and strategic plan to promote and manage attendance. This should include identified staff and systems to support the tracking and monitoring of attendance and robust procedures for responding to absence.

Schools should be guided by the principles of self-evaluation to ensure that they meet the needs of all children and young people to promote good attendance for all. This is particularly important for children and young people who face particular barriers as outlined above (see section 2.2).

The self-evaluation toolkit (see Appendix 13) should be used by schools to review and develop their strategic approach to promoting good attendance. The toolkit draws on the level five illustrations, features of highly effective practice and challenge questions from a range of the quality indicators in *How Good is Our School* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) pertaining to promoting and supporting attendance. This will allow schools to reflect and evaluate their work and use evidence from these activities to plan future improvements.

An East Lothian Council SEEMIS monitoring group will track and monitor figures on a monthly basis to develop an overview of attendance and provide support to schools to develop good practice in promoting attendance and responding effectively to absence.

## 3 School Attendance Procedures

### 3.1 Recording Attendance

East Lothian Council have clear protocols and procedures in place to support schools with the recording and management of attendance using SEEMIS. The latest version of the attendance and absence codes are available for schools to access through the Management Information Centre on Education Exchange. Notifications are also issued to schools by the Information and Research team when there are updates to the codes, including updated notes on the appropriate use of codes.

There is a legal responsibility for schools to complete and maintain accurate registers of school attendance. Class teachers are responsible for completing registers for the children and young people attending their classes and this should take place at least twice per day. Schools, having due regard to the welfare, wellbeing and health and safety of children and young people, must be in a position to account for those present or out on an organised activity at all times.

East Lothian Council is required to report on school attendance statistics regularly to the Scottish Government.



## 3.2 Definition of Attendance

The Scottish Government (2019) has defined attendance as the “participation in a programme of educational activities arranged and agreed by the school”

This includes, but not limited to:

- Attendance at school
- Learning out with the school provided by another learning provider while still on the school roll
- Educational visits, excursions and residential visits
- Interviews and visits relating to further and higher education or careers events
- Debates, sports, musical or drama activities in conjunction with school
- Study Leave for learners participating in National Qualifications, if arranged by the school during the period of examination timetable
- Receiving education via hospital or outreach teaching services
- Work Experience or volunteering

## 3.3 Authorised Absence

The schools Senior Management team can authorise absence when they are satisfied by a legitimate reason for the request.

Reasons for authorised absence can include:

- Illness
- Medical and dental appointments
- Meetings prior to, and during court appearances and other legal processes
- Attendance at, or in connection with, a Children’s Hearing or Care Review, or appointment with another service provider, e.g. social worker
- Religious observance
- Bereavement
- Weddings or funerals of close friends and family
- Arranged absence in relation to children in Gypsy/Traveller families
- Participation in non-school debates, sports, musical or drama activities agreed by the school
- Lack of transport – including due to bad weather
- Family recovery from exceptional domestic circumstances or trauma
- Period of exclusion to be recorded in a separate category
- Extended leave with parental consent including some young carer activities
- Family holidays – in **exceptional** circumstances, usually related to the profession of a parent

### 3.4 Children and Young People Unable to Attend School Due to Prolonged Ill Health

For some children and young people, their learning is interrupted due to prolonged ill health. This can be for a single block of time or for a number of episodes. Although not an exhaustive list, this can be as a result of: accidents or trauma, chronic, long term, life limiting or terminal conditions, mental health issues, and conditions which require repeated medical intervention, such as dialysis.

A child or young person absent from school through ill health may receive treatment in a variety of settings, such as a paediatric hospital, an adult hospital, a mental health facility, their own home or in a different school. In some cases, this may mean that the child or young person travels to a hospital which is located beyond the local authority area in which they live or in which they are educated. Education may be provided in any and all of these settings and the responsibility for doing so remains with the child or young person's home authority.

Legislation requires local authorities to make special arrangements for children absent from school through ill health without undue delay. The main emphasis in the initial period of absence for children or young people will be on recovery of the child or young person's fitness and health and the time for this will vary. However, where possible, absence should not lead to a reduction of education provision which would have a detrimental effect on the child or young person's progress.

Where a child or young person's illness is known, or reasonably thought, to be likely to extend **beyond 5 days**, then education should proceed immediately, if medical assessment permits. This is of particular importance for children and young people who require recurrent admission to hospital, even for relatively short periods.

Where there is less certainty over the possible length of any absence, education out with school should commence at the earliest opportunity and certainly **no more than 15 working days of continuous or 20 working days of intermittent absence**.

Within the Child's Planning Framework, the Named Education Contact has a key role for maintaining communication with parents and carers and the child or young person. It is paramount that they identify what kind of work the child or young person can manage, in what format the work needs to be presented and what kind of contact the child or young person needs with school – both in terms of academic support and social support from peers. They will also work with appropriate professionals to help facilitate the child or young person's return to school, which may take place on a phased basis over a period of time, and what supports will be required once they are back in school.

Further information on supporting children and young people impacted by prolonged ill health can be found at: [Education of children unable to attend school due to ill health: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/education/children-unable-to-attend-school-due-to-ill-health-guidance)

### 3.5 Diverse School Communities

Some groups of children and young people may require authorised absence because of their religious or cultural practices or family's mobility.

Children and young people of all faiths may take authorised absence to enable them to participate in religious observance. In some cultures, family celebrations are major events which may require children or young people to travel overseas. In these circumstances schools should code this as '**EXL – Extended Leave with Parental Consent**' which allows them to remain on the school register and prevents school attendance data being negatively impacted.

When a school is notified that Gypsy/Traveller children or young people are leaving to travel, the school should record their absence as '**EXL – Extended Leave with Parental Consent**'.

If the school has not been notified that Gypsy/Traveller children or young people are leaving to travel, the school should record their absence as '**TBC – To be Confirmed**' until school have confirmed that they are travelling.

Further information on supporting inclusive educational approaches for travelling cultures is available in [Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People from Travelling Cultures](#).

### 3.6 Unauthorised Absence

Schools should record an absence as an unauthorised absence where no satisfactory reason has been provided. Unauthorised absence can include:

- Absence with parental awareness in specific circumstances. This may be because a parent believes their child will benefit from participation in an alternative activity. Sometimes, parents allow absence because they are in dispute with the school or believe the school is failing to act in the best interests of the child or young person.
- Family holidays during term time. Family holidays should **not** be recorded as authorised unless in **exceptional** circumstances. Exceptional circumstances include where a parent's employment is of a nature where school holiday leave cannot be accommodated. Such employment may include armed forces, emergency services or professions where parents are required to work away from home for extended periods.
- Occasional absence without parental awareness. Consistent and vigilant school based processes are essential for safeguarding children and young people. Follow-up action must be taken following identification of a child not in school without their parent's knowledge.
- Longer term absence due to school related or for home and wider issues
- Absence relating to substance and alcohol misuse. In this and the above case, the named education contact should use the Child's Planning Framework to assess and support the child or young person's wellbeing needs.

The SEEMiS code '**TBC - to be confirmed**' should only be used for unexplained absence when staff are marking a pupil absent in registration and they do not yet know the reason for the absence. This has been set as the default absence mark in registration screens in SEEMIS Click & Go for all East

Lothian schools and must always be updated as soon as possible by the office staff when the actual reason is known. **TBC** will count as a truancy in SEEMIS in a pupil's absence record and in the statutory reporting for the school's absence statistics if it is not changed.

### 3.7 Compulsory Measures

East Lothian Council is committed to ensuring that efforts to improve outcomes for children involve an appropriate and proportionate level of intervention. Measures for compulsion are expensive processes which are time consuming and can lead to further unnecessary interventions into family life.

Measures for compulsion can be used when multi-agency efforts through the Child's Planning Framework to improve attendance have been exhausted. Further details of measures can be found at Appendix 3.

Where a child or young person fails to attend school regularly without a reasonable excuse, a referral to the Reporter can be made under [section 67\(o\) of the Children's Hearing \(Scotland\) Act 2011](#). This option may be appropriate where there are a range of other concerns which together with non-attendance, form grounds for referral.

Before reaching a decision to proceed to an initial referral, East Lothian schools will work together with children's services and other partners to complete a thorough assessment, through the Child Planning Framework, to ensure that all other options have been exhausted.

**Prior to any referral being made to the Children's Reporter schools must involve Children's Services.**

If the Reporter considers that compulsory measures of supervision are necessary, the matter will be referred to a Children's Hearing for a decision.

Attending a children's hearing can be a stressful experience for a child or young person, and there is little evidence that imposition of legal sanctions improve attendance. It should therefore be seen as last resort.

### 3.8 Children and Young People Missing from Education.

Children and young people missing from education are defined as those of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll or being educated in an alternative provision such as at home or in a private provision. It may also include those who have not attended school for a period of time.

Children and young people missing from education are at particular risk of underachievement and becoming victims of abuse, exploitation or radicalisation. Figures obtained by the *BBC* in 2014 stated that in excess of 2600 children and young people disappeared from Scottish schools for a prolonged period of time and some were never found. Research from *Who Cares Scotland* highlights the particular vulnerability of children and young people with care experience. In 2018 a reported 1,935 children went missing from care in Scotland.

In line with the principles of GIRFEC, East Lothian Council is committed to working in partnership with colleagues from other agencies to prevent our children and young people becoming missing from education.

In all cases when a child or young person's absence is unexplained and there are associated child protection concerns, schools must **initiate child protection procedures** without delay.

If a child or young person's absence is unexplained and they have a Lead Professional, they should be notified, in writing, without delay. Children and young people most likely to have a Lead Professional include those who are:

- the subject of a Statutory Order;
- the subject of a Child Protection investigation;
- on the Child protection register;
- 6 months post registration of the Child Protection register;
- on an interim compulsory supervision order or compulsory supervision order or
- the subject of an assessment surrounding possible accommodation (cusp of care).

If there are no child protection concerns and the child or young person does not have a lead professional schools should use the SEEMiS Group Call function and contact the emergency contacts on the first two days of an unexplained absence to ascertain the reason for it.

On the third day, if no contact has been made with the child or young person's parent, the school should call the social work contact centre by 11am on 01875 824 309 and ask to speak to the attendance worker. The information given will be assessed by the team leader who will decide if a home visit is required by a family support worker. The decision may also be taken to make a referral to Police Scotland, Public Protection Unit / Missing Person Co-ordinator to investigate.

Based on the Named Education Contact's knowledge of the child or young person and their family circumstances, within 4 weeks of the child or young person's last day at school, a referral to Children Missing from Education Service should be made. Contact: [cme\\_scotland@gov.uk](mailto:cme_scotland@gov.uk).

The Children Missing from Education (Scotland) Service provides guidance and advice on good practice concerning cases of children missing from education, and checks the national electronic School2School transfer system (S2S) to see if the child has enrolled at another publicly funded school in Scotland. The CME Service facilitates agreements between local authorities, national agencies and partners in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland to allow exchanges of information, and will support local authorities in using these agreements.

During this time Children's Services will continue to assess the situation and link in with education to decide on the next steps.

If, following multi-agency discussion, it is agreed that the child or young person is missing from education SEEMiS should be updated to show the child / young person's removal from the school roll. See Appendix 4 SEEMiS School Leaver Process for guidance.

Children's Services will ensure the child or young person is logged in Mosaic as missing from education.

Further information from the Scottish Government on Children Missing from Education can be obtained at [Schools: Children missing from education - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

### 3.9 Attendance Beyond Statutory School Leaving Age

School leaving arrangements are defined in terms of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. There are two dates: 31 May and the first day of the Christmas holiday period (or 21 December, if earlier) are the statutory summer and winter leaving dates in each year.

Summer Leaving Dates:

- A pupil whose sixteenth birthday is on or after 1 March but before 31 May can leave school on 31 May.
- A pupil whose sixteenth birthday is on or after 31 May but before 1 October can leave on 31 May.

Winter Leaving Dates:

- a pupil whose sixteenth birthday is on or after 1 October but before the first day of the Christmas holiday period can leave school on the first day of the Christmas holidays (or 21 December if earlier)
- a pupil whose sixteenth birthday falls after the winter leaving date but before 1 March can leave school on the first day of the Christmas holidays (or 21 December if earlier)

Young people, who choose to stay on at school beyond school leaving age, and their parents should be strongly encouraged to consider their continued commitment to full attendance - defined as *“participation in a programme of educational activities arranged and agreed by the school”*.

East Lothian schools will consider the flexibilities of Curriculum for Excellence and the support provided by Developing the Young Workforce programmes to work with young people and their parents to plan a programme of learning which is best suited to the personal development of the individual, and encourages them to engage in working towards their next step beyond school.

There should also be ongoing support and encouragement for young people to ensure their sustained commitment and engagement to their plan.

For young people in the sixth year of their secondary education, there is a balance between continued achievement and attainment and the desire for increased independence, often afforded in the final stage of secondary schooling, in preparation for post school destinations. It is recommended that a young person’s individual timetable in sixth year should provide a minimum of two thirds of the fulltime timetable. This can be comprised of National Qualification classes and opportunities for wider achievement.

Attendance must also be monitored to ensure proper entitlement to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The EMA is a means tested weekly payment, paid directly to children or young people who stay on at school, and is designed to help overcome financial barriers which otherwise may prevent them from staying on.

## 4 Alternative Attendance Arrangements

Curriculum for Excellence promotes flexibility in the curriculum and allows schools to personalise learner journeys to meet the needs of all children and young people. When an alternative to traditional attendance at school is requested, it should be considered in relation to the child or young person's wellbeing needs and supported by the Child's Planning Framework. All decisions to grant an alternative attendance arrangement should be underpinned by a child or young person's right to an education as outlined by United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child.

### 4.1 Home Education and Flexi-schooling

Parents can make a request to East Lothian Council to withdraw their child from an East Lothian school. This can be on a full time basis for the purpose of home education or for part of the child or young person's time at school as a flexi-schooling request.

Under section 35 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, the parents of a child or young person who has been attending an East Lothian School must seek local authority consent before withdrawing the child or young person from school. East Lothian Council must not unreasonably withhold this consent.

When considering these requests, East Lothian Council is guided by the Article 18 of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the child or young person's voice and the necessity to take a child centered approach. East Lothian Council is also guided by the duties, obligations and rights of the parents and its own legislative and policy position.

There are a variety of reasons why a parent may decide to withdraw their child or young person from school. Although not an exhaustive list, some reasons include:

- The wish to follow a particular educational or ideological philosophy.
- Religious or cultural beliefs.
- Dissatisfaction with the system.
- A child's reluctance to go to school.
- A child's problems when at school, e.g. bullying.
- Geographical – due to remoteness, or mobility for work or cultural reasons.
- The wish to deal with a child's additional support needs in a particular way.
- As a short term intervention for a particular reason.

Parents do not have to give a reason for choosing to educate their child or young person at home, however, it is helpful for the school and East Lothian Council to understand the reasons. When requesting to withdraw their child or young person from school, consent is given on how the parents intend to educate their child or young person at home, not their reason for doing so.

There are circumstances in which parents do not need to consent to home educate their child or young person. This includes when the child or young person:

- has never attended a local authority school;
- has never attended a local authority school in the local authority area;
- is being withdrawn from an independent school;

- has finished primary but not yet started secondary school or if
- the school they were attending has closed.

For children and young people with Additional Support Needs, East Lothian Council has no legal duty under The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and subsequent amendments to provide additional support to children and young people who are educated at home. The parent has responsibility for meeting these needs.

In the case of flexi-schooling requests, the school has no oversight of the quality or reporting on educational provision, achievement or attainment across the curriculum for the periods that the child or the young person does not attend school. The school has no responsibility to provide support for any learning missed while the child or young person is not attending school whilst being flexi schooled.

Flexi-schooling is different to a part-time timetable where East Lothian Council has the full responsibility for providing the child or young person with an education. East Lothian schools follow Curriculum for Excellence and use the East Lothian Council curriculum frameworks for learning in every subject area to track pupils against national and local benchmarks. With any flexi-schooling arrangement, teachers would need to liaise and meet regularly with the families providing aspects of the curriculum in order to get a full picture of a child's attainment across subjects and to plan next steps. Overall, schools do not have the capacity to do this making it challenging for flexi-schooling to be supported.

The decision to agree a flexi-schooling request is taken by the Head of Education. It can be granted in exceptional circumstances and usually for a specified period, for example when a child or young person has a complex or enduring medical condition or to support a transition to school following a period of home education.

For flexi-schooling requests, the Named Education Contact or Lead Professional, where relevant, should convene a Child Planning Meeting to discuss its suitability. The associated Child's Plan and targets agreed during this meeting must accurately reflect the flexi-schooling arrangements and this should be supported by any other professionals or agencies working with the child or young person.

The child or young person's attendance pattern must be accurately recorded on SEEMiS using the code '**SNA – Should Not Attend**' for the periods that it has been agreed that the child or young person should not attend.

In the cases of request for withdrawal from school to home educate and for flexi-schooling parents should, in the first instance indicate their intention to East Lothian Council in writing to: [educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk).

To support their request, parents should be provided with the checklist of information needed in Appendix 5. The request should give consent to East Lothian Council to contact any other agencies who are working with your family to discuss this request, if appropriate. Other agencies may include social work or health. It should also include a section for your child or young person (if aged over 12 and with the capacity to do so) to record their views about this request. Although not required, it is also helpful if the parent outlines their reasons for the request.

On receipt of all of the supporting information for the request, East Lothian Council will convene a panel to consider this and make a decision. In the case of flexi-schooling requests, the paperwork and plans resulting from the Child Planning Meeting should be submitted to Education Enquiries



mailbox to assist the decision making process. East Lothian Council will draw on its own records and those of other agencies.

Specific incidences which will warrant further investigation include if the child or young person:

- has been referred to social work or the police on child protection grounds and the matter is being investigated;
- is on the child protection register;
- has been referred to the reporter on care and protection grounds or
- is subject to a supervision order.

On receipt of this request East Lothian Council will acknowledge this. A decision, in writing, will be issued to the parent and child or young person, if aged over 12, within six weeks.

If East Lothian Council is satisfied with the request, consent will be granted. If East Lothian Council is unsatisfied of the request, the parent will be given an opportunity to address any specific concerns. If East Lothian Council is still unsatisfied, consent will not be granted.

When consent to home educate has been granted, the Scottish Government recommends that East Lothian Council makes contact with families on an annual basis. This will normally be done through a written submission from the parent which confirms that suitable and efficient education is being provided. If the parent wishes to discuss this in more detail with East Lothian Council, they can request a meeting by contacting [educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:educationenquiries@eastlothian.gov.uk). This is a supportive measure with the intention of promoting positive relationships. East Lothian Council will also seek to make written contact with the child or young person on an annual basis. These are not legislative requirements.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 makes provision for when East Lothian Council becomes unsatisfied that children or young people are not receiving educational provision which is efficient and suitable to their age, ability and aptitude.

If, having gathered sufficient information and evidence, East Lothian Council is unable to satisfy themselves of the suitability and efficiency of a child or young person's education they shall serve a notice to the parent in accordance with the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. The parent shall have between 7-14 days to provide East Lothian Council with additional information. If this information does not satisfy East Lothian Council an attendance order will be served.

## 4.2 Part-time Timetables

East Lothian Council recognises the right that all children and young people have to an education which meets their needs. For the overarching majority of children and young people this will be through full time attendance at school.

There are **exceptional** circumstances in which the needs of some children and young people are best met through part-time attendance at school. This will include:

Condition	SEEMiS Code
A medical condition which prevents a child or young person's full time attendance at school and they are unable to undertake any other learning when they are not in school.	<b>PTH</b>
Where a child or young person has become significantly disengaged from school and part-time attendance is agreed as a suitable temporary and short-term intervention for their reintegration back into school. There is concern that full time attendance may increase the likelihood of exclusion.	<b>SNA</b>
To support a return to school following a period of exclusion.	<b>PTX</b>

The purpose of a part-time timetable is to:

- Create a bespoke support package in response to meeting the learning and wellbeing needs of a child or young person.
- Help a child or young person re-engage with their learning and school community.
- Allow a child or young person to develop relationships with key adults who are supporting them.

**In all cases**, a part-time timetable must be:

- supported through the Child's Planning Framework;
- in full consultation with the parent and child or young person. With the parental agreement that they are taking responsibility for their child when they are not in school;
- discussed and agreed with other agencies involved in the life of the child or young person including social work and health;
- a **temporary** measure which is reviewed as minimum every 4weeks with a clear vision for full time reintegration into school;
- planned to build on the child or young person's strengths and positive relationships that they have in school;
- planned to incorporate learning opportunities in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and
- able to safeguard and protect a child or young person. This is a paramount consideration for **ALL** children and young people and particularly so for vulnerable children and young people with social work support or who are care experienced.
- Discussed and agreed with a Quality Improvement Officer or Senior Manager

## 4.3 Hosting Arrangements

A hosting arrangement involves placing a pupil at another East Lothian mainstream school (host school), other than the one at which the pupil is enrolled (base school).

This arrangement takes place over a defined period of time and if considered successful by both the base school and host school, the pupil will be enrolled on the register of the host school permanently. During the period of hosting they remain on their base school's roll.

The rationale for hosting is based on:

- Maintaining pupils in mainstream education, where appropriate.
- Minimising any loss of education.
- Providing a 'fresh start' to pupils where this is felt to be appropriate.

Successful hosting arrangements are dependent on all those involved having key information about the pupil, and being very clear on the roles and responsibilities of the base school and of the host school. Hosting arrangements should be part of a wider package of support put in place through the Child's Planning Framework.

Hosting arrangements are **not short-term punitive placements**. Hosting arrangements should be planned with an expectation of a permanent move.

Hosting will be considered for a child or young person who has:

- been excluded on a number of occasions and it has become increasingly difficult to find effective strategies to maintain a place in the 'base' school. Clear evidence is available that a wide range of strategies have already been tried.

OR

- circumstances which indicate that a 'fresh start' is an appropriate strategy. Clear evidence as to why a 'fresh start' is a positive option should be available.

To arrange a hosting agreement:

- Hosting arrangements are agreed and organised between the Head Teacher of the base school and the Head Teacher of the host school.
- The availability of a hosting arrangement should be known prior to discussion with parents and the child or young person. Professionals should not raise unrealistic expectations prior to a hosting arrangement being confirmed.
- When a hosting arrangement is identified, all arrangements must be discussed at a Child's Planning Meeting. The base school, parent, child or young person and agencies involved must attend and be in agreement with a hosting arrangement option.
- If the parents or the child or young person are not in favour of a host arrangement then alternative options should be discussed through Child's Planning Framework.

- The parents must be able and willing to support the host arrangement (including transportation) and see this as a measure to resolve the difficulties presented/experienced by the child or young person.

If the hosting arrangement is agreed:

- The base school will be responsible for ensuring that all necessary information is collated for transfer to the host school.
- This timescale should be weeks rather than months. In some cases the timescale may require to be extended to see progress.
- The named education contact from the base school should liaise with the host school; attend key meetings and co-ordinate the transfer of information.
- The host school will identify a named education contact who will seek information from the base school to ensure that the pupil settles into the host school.
- A Child's Planning meeting will take place to monitor the hosting arrangement.
- The young person must be presented for examination through his/her base school.
- The decision to enrol the pupil at the host school will be taken by the Head Teacher of the host school.

In the case of a hosting arrangement concluding with the child or young person returning to their base school, the base school will assume all responsibility for the child or young person regardless of the timescale within the hosting arrangement.

## Appendix 1: Relevant National Legislation and Guidance

- Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: A Positive Approach to the Promotion and Management of Attendance in Scottish Schools <https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-1-attendance-scottish-schools/>
- Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions <https://www.gov.scot/publications/included-engaged-involved-part-2-positive-approachpreventing-managing-school/>
- Adverse Childhood Experiences: Action to prevent adverse childhood experiences where we can, and tackle their impact <https://www.gov.scot/publications/adverse-childhood-experiences/>
- Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research 2016 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/behaviour-scottish-schools-research-2016/pages/10/>
- Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative <https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/children-and-young-peopleimprovement-collaborative/>
- CSE the signs – child sexual exploitation <http://csethesigns.scot/>
- Developing a positive whole school ethos and culture: relationships, learning and behaviour <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/developing-positive-whole-school-ethos-culturerelationships-learning-behaviour/>
- Developing the Young Workforce [https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/Developing%20the%20Young%20Workforce%20\(DYW\)](https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/Developing%20the%20Young%20Workforce%20(DYW))
- Getting it right for every child <https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/> Home Education Guidance – Guidance for parents and local authorities on home education <https://www.gov.scot/publications/home-education-guidance/>
- Improving educational outcomes for children and young people from travelling cultures <https://www.gov.scot/publications/improving-educational-outcomes-children-youngpeople-travelling-cultures/>
- Mental Health strategy – CAHMS [https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/psychology/multiprofessional-psychology/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-\(camhs\)](https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/education-and-training/by-discipline/psychology/multiprofessional-psychology/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-services-(camhs))
- National guidance for child protection in Scotland (2021) [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-for-child-protection-in-scotland-2021/)
- National Improvement Framework <https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/national-improvement-framework/>
- Parentzone <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>
- Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People <https://www.gov.scot/publications/respect-national-approach-anti-bullying-scotlandchildren-young-people/>
- Scottish Attainment Challenge <https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/pupil-attainment/>
- Support Children’s Learning <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidanceeducation-additional-support-learning-scotland/>
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

- Guidance on Education for Children and Young People Unable to Attend School Due to Ill Health [Education of children unable to attend school due to ill health: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/education/children/ill-health)

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## Appendix 2: Relevant East Lothian Council Policy and Guidance

- Included, Engaged & Involved: Identifying, Assessing and Providing for Additional Support Needs of Children and Young People (2018)
- The Handbook of Procedures for the Management of Pupils with Healthcare Needs in Educational Establishments (2019)
- Admission to Specialist Educational Provision guidance (2017)
- Allocation of Resources to Support Children and Young People with Additional support needs (2017)
- Included, Engaged and Involved: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2018)
- Included, Engaged and Involved: Managing Distressed and Challenging Behaviour (2018)
- Respect for All: Promoting Positive and Respectful Relationships in All our Schools (2020)
- Nurture, Recovery and Reconnection (2020) GOOGLE Drive [Nurture, Recovery & Reconnection - schools \(google.com\)](#)
- Getting it Right for Every Child GOOGLE Drive [GIRFEC in East Lothian \(google.com\)](#)

## Appendix 3: Measures for Compulsory Compliance

### Attendance Orders

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 allows for an education authority to require a parent to provide an explanation for non-attendance, if it believes there is not a reasonable excuse for non-attendance (section 36). The education authority notifies the parent that a meeting or hearing is required, and that an explanation for non-attendance must be provided to the authority.

To allow the parent to prepare for the meeting, it will not be held within two days of the notification but not later than seven days after the notification.

#### Process:

If the parent fails to satisfy the authority that there was a reasonable excuse for the pupil's non-attendance the authority may:

- proceed to prosecution through the sheriff court, or
- report the circumstances to the procurator fiscal, or
- warn the parent and postpone the decision to report for a maximum of six weeks.

In the circumstance where the education authority decides to postpone the decision it may, if the child or young person is of school age (5-16), make an attendance order. An attendance order requires the parent to ensure the child or young person attends the school which he or she has been attending or another local school (a school attended by children or young people residing in the same neighbourhood).

#### An Attendance Order:

- Requires the parent to ensure the attendance of the child or young person at a school named in the order.
- Requires that the views of the parent on which school should be named should be considered by the authority.
- May name a public school, or other school which is willing to receive the child or young person. A school at which the parent will be required to pay fees will not be named within the order unless at the request of the parent.
- Shall not name a special school unless the child or young person has additional support needs requiring specialist support.

A copy of the attendance order will be served upon the parent and will place them under a duty to ensure the child or young person's regular attendance at the named school.



## **Right of Appeal**

If parents are unhappy, they may, within 14 days of being served with the order, appeal to the sheriff. The sheriff is able to amend, confirm or annul the order. The decision of the sheriff is final.

Parents may wish to seek legal representation when making an appeal to the sheriff. Legal aid may be available for advice and representation, subject to certain criteria for eligibility. Further information is available from the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

## **Amending an Attendance Order**

If the attendance order is later amended (e.g. a different school is named), the education authority should inform the parent of the proposed amendments and allow the parent 14 days to make objections. If objections are made and not upheld by the authority, the parent can appeal to the sheriff as above.

## **Moving Between Local Authority Areas**

A child or young person who is the subject of an attendance order may move from his or her home authority to a new authority area. In this case, the new authority may notify the parent of their intention to amend the attendance order by updating the school named in the order to a school which is in the family's new catchment area.

Where a child or young person is attending a school in another authority area and the education authority providing education believes that a parent should explain the non-attendance of a child or young person at school, the authority in which the child or young person resides would be responsible for arranging a meeting or hearing and serving notice on the parent to attend the meeting or hearing for an explanation to be provided.

## **Prosecution**

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 states that if a parent has not complied with an attendance order, an application may be made to the sheriff court for prosecution (either by the education authority or Procurator Fiscal). If convicted, a parent may be:

- fined (not exceeding Standard scale level 3, currently not exceeding £1000),
- imprisoned for up to one month, or
- both fined and imprisoned.

The education authority, may also make a referral to the reporter, if compulsory measures are required to support the child.

## **Home Education**

Scottish Government guidance on the circumstances in which parents may choose to educate their children at home, and the associated procedures are available from the Scottish Government.

## **Family Separation**

In the case of a child or young person whose parents are separated, education authorities should consider the most appropriate means of communicating the process of making an attendance order to parents. It is likely that by the time an attendance order is being considered, there will have been difficulties in the relationship between the school/education authority and the parent. Advocacy or mediation services, where both parties meet voluntarily to discuss their concerns and agree a mutual solution with an independent third party, should be used to ensure that the parent understands the process and has support to express views or appeal. Further disengagement or conflict during the attendance order process will make positive outcomes for the child difficult to achieve.

## **Additional Support Needs**

Children who have sufficient understanding of the process and who are judged to have sufficient legal capacity (this is presumed from age 12 unless the child does not have a sufficient understanding of the matter being considered) should be kept informed of the process. They may attend meetings or hearings with their parent. Such children should be consulted with the parent on the named school or subsequent amendments. However, the action is clearly being taken against the parent who has legal responsibility for ensuring the child attends school and it is for the parent to appeal, not the young person (a child of legal capacity may appeal in the case of exclusion, see Circular 8/03 Right of appeal against the decision to exclude – paragraph 37). The attendance order should be regarded as a stage in an ongoing process. The child may attend school following an attendance order, but support arrangements and long term monitoring of attendance and support needs will be required.

## **Parenting Orders**

Local authorities also have powers to apply to the sheriff for a parenting order under the Antisocial Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004. These orders are for one year, and require parents to participate in programmes designed to improve their parenting by receiving support services which previously the parent has refused, and for their compliance to be monitored by a named officer.

The local authority must consult with other agencies in a multi-agency planning process, and consult with the reporter to the children's panel, before considering with its legal advisors whether an application for a parenting order should be made.

If the procurator fiscal raises criminal proceedings in respect of an alleged breach of an order and the parent is found guilty or pleads guilty, he or she will be liable to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1,000). If the fine is not paid a court must impose a supervised attendance order (SAO). An SAO is a community-based alternative to imprisonment for fine default. For this type of offence the court can only impose a sentence of imprisonment for the fine default where an SAO has been breached.

Guidance for authorities on parenting orders is available from Guidance on Parenting Orders: Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004

## **Referral to the Reporter**

Referral to the Reporter may be an option considered by an education authority in conjunction with other approaches above, or usually separately, as an important stage in engaging the child or young

person and the parent in compulsory interventions to improve outcomes for the child. Referral would usually only be made after appropriate measures at a local level have been exhausted.

Where a child is failing to attend school regularly without reasonable excuse, a referral to the Reporter can be made under section 67(o) of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011. However, non-attendance may be a factor considered alongside other grounds for referral where there are a range of concerns about the child or young person. Where the Reporter considers that compulsory measures of supervision are necessary, the matter will be referred to a Children's Hearing. The Children's Hearing will make the decision on whether compulsory measures are necessary and if so, what those measures should be.

It is helpful for education authorities and Reporters to work together to make the Children's Hearing aware of the range of approaches that schools and education authorities may have already tried, to improve a child or young person's school attendance. It is also helpful to consider with other services, which may provide interventions recommended by the Children's Hearing, how reintegration into school can be planned for during their work with the child or young person.

### **Anti-social behaviour orders**

An Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) or Acceptable Behaviour Agreement is a written agreement between a person who has been involved in anti-social behaviour and one or more agencies whose role it is to prevent further anti-social behaviour i.e. a housing association, local authority, police or school etc.

They are generally used for young people, but can also be used for adults, and may be used with parents in relation to the behaviour of their children.

A local authority may also apply for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) under the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004. In these circumstances, a child or young person is likely to already have been involved in the hearings system and will be well known to children's services. The child or young person will be considered to be at risk of persistent anti-social behaviour.

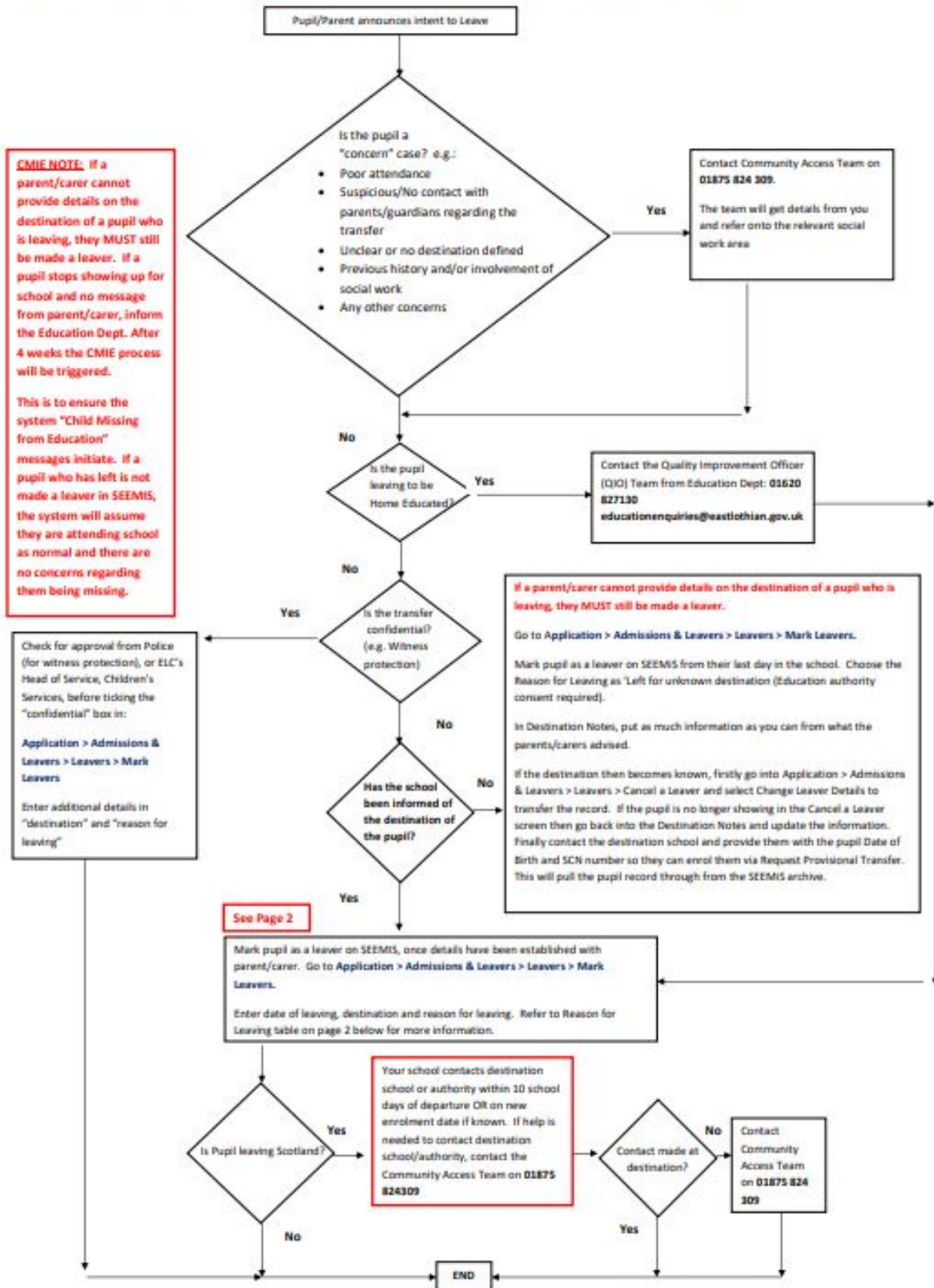
Non-attendance at school is not anti-social behaviour in itself, but clearly while a young person is not at school, his or her activities may be part of their involvement in anti-social behaviour, causing significant disruption to the community. Improving school attendance may be made a condition of an ABC or ASBO, and services should work together to ensure that the conditions applied enhance the potential for a young person to be engaged in learning, whether in school or in the community.

Education authorities and schools can make a significant difference to outcomes for children and young people on the cusp of persistent and serious offending by working in partnership with other services to devise flexible and creative approaches to learning opportunities.

# Appendix 4: SEEMiS School Leaving Process

## SEEMiS School Leaver Process

This process is for all pupils who leave school **before** they have reached the minimum leaving age – ie they are at compulsory school age.



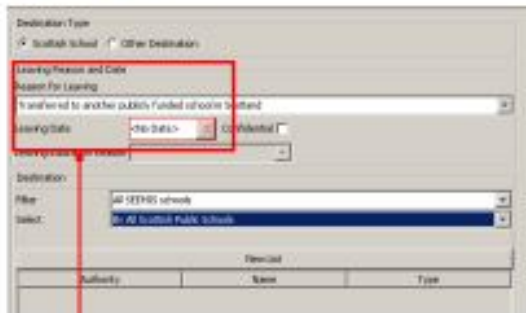
Leaving Process For Schools in SEEMiS V4.0 (002).Docx

**Entering Leaver Destination and Reason for Leaving Details:**

- Go to **Application > Admissions & Leavers > Leavers > Mark Leavers:**
- Enter whether destination is another "Scottish School" or an "Other Destination".



**A) If "Scottish School":**



1. Enter "Reason For Leaving" and "Leaving Date"
2. Do NOT click "Confidential" unless referred to Police/Head of Children's Services
3. **Find and Select** the specific school using the "Destination" filters

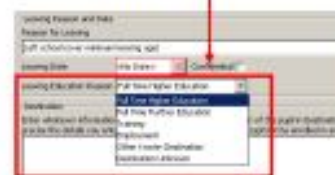


4. Click "Mark Leaver"

**B) If "Other Destination":**



1. Enter "Reason For Leaving" and "Leaving Date"
2. Do NOT click "Confidential" unless referred to Police/Head of Children's Services
3. If "Reason For Leaving" is Left School (over minimum age), enter reason in "Leaving Education Reason":



4. If destination is not known, enter as much information as possible in the "Destination" free text box



5. Click "Mark Leaver"

**SEEMIS Reason For Leaving Codes**

SEEMIS Code:	Notes:
Left school (over minimum age)	Minimum age as defined by the Education Scotland Act 1980
Left for home education	Special arrangements need to be made. Ensure the responsible Quality Improvement Officer has been contacted (01620 827 620)
Left for unknown destination	<b>To be used only when awaiting confirmation of pupil destination and that contact is being maintained with parent/carer.</b> If there are any concerns for the welfare of the child contact the Duty Attendance Worker for Children's Services on <b>01875 824309</b>
Exceptional permission to leave school before minimum age	<b>Education authority permission required to use this code.</b>
Permanently excluded	<b>Education authority permission required to use this code.</b> The school will receive written permission from the council to remove the pupil.
Pupil has died	
Pre school pupil has been removed by parent	Schools should get confirmation in writing from parents. If there are any grounds for concern for the safety of a pupil call the Duty Attendance Worker for Children's Services on <b>01875 824309</b>
Moved abroad (excluding forces school)	Include some indication/details in the "Destination Notes" on the whereabouts of the pupil
Moved to school in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (including forces school)	Include some indication/details in the "Destination Notes" on the whereabouts of the pupil
Authorised Absence - Travelling as part of culture/tradition (Education authority consent required)	Pupil has permission to travel as part of their tradition, for family connections or work commitments. <b>Education authority permission required to use this code.</b>

Please note: It is the school's responsibility to check a pupil who has left Scotland, has arrived at the intended destination school/local authority. This should be done within 10 school days\* or on the intended date of enrolment if known. \*As defined in "Safe & Well - Children Missing Education", CME (Scotland) 2005

## Appendix 5: Home Schooling and Flexi-schooling – Parental Request Supporting Information

Supporting Information	Details / Notes
How your child's education will help to prepare them for life in modern society and achieve their full potential.	
How the education you intend to provide supports your child's needs, attitudes and aspirations.	
The kinds of resources and materials your child will have access to.	
How your child will have opportunities to interact with other children and adults, and have an appropriate level of physical activity.	
How your child will be involved in a broad spectrum of activities and be stimulated by their learning experiences.	
How you will meet your child's additional support needs, if applicable.	
Consent for East Lothian Council to contact any other agencies who are working with your family to discuss this request, if appropriate. Other agencies may include social work or health.	
The views of your child (if aged over 12 and with the capacity to do so) about this proposal.	
Although not required, your reasons for this request.	

## Appendix 6: Attendance Letter (1) - Parents

Dear (insert parent name)

### Child / Young Person's Name

I am writing to advise that (insert child / young person's name)'s attendance at school has fallen below 90% in the past four week period.

We are concerned as attendance levels such as this can impact negatively on a child or young person's learning and wellbeing.

We would like to work with you to support (insert child / young person's name) and address any barriers which there may to attendance.

I will contact you in the coming days to discuss this further with you.

OR

We would like to invite you (and your child) to a child planning meeting with on (insert date and time of meeting) to discuss this with you and identify appropriate solution to support (insert child / young person's name)'s attendance.

I have enclosed some documents which might be helpful in formulating your view and (insert child / young person's name)'s views prior to the meeting.

I have also enclosed a recent attendance printout for your information which we can refer to during our discussion / meeting.

If the above date is not suitable for you, please call us at the school to reschedule the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Designation

School Name

## Appendix 7: Attendance Letter (1) - Young Person over 12 Years

Dear (young person's name)

I am writing to advise that your attendance at school has fallen below 90% in the past four week period.

We are concerned as attendance levels such as this can impact negatively on your learning and wellbeing.

We would like to work with you to support you and address any barriers which there may be to attendance.

I will be contacting your parent to share this concern and a discussion or meeting will follow which you will be invited to be part of. This will help us to identify solutions to support improvements in your attendance.

I have enclosed some documents which might be helpful in formulating your views before the meeting.

I have also enclosed a recent attendance printout for your information which we can refer to during our discussion / meeting.

Yours sincerely

Designation

School Name



## Appendix 8: Attendance Letter (2) - Parents

Dear (insert parent name)

### **Child/Young Person's Name**

Further to my letter of (insert date) and our subsequent conversation / child planning meeting, I am writing to you as we remain concerned about (insert child / young person's name)'s continued pattern of poor / non-attendance.

According to our records, (insert child / young person's name)'s attendance is now XX% over the past eight week period. I have enclosed a print out of (insert child / young person's name)'s attendance record.

An appointment has been made for you (and insert child / young person's name) to attend a child planning meeting on (insert date and time of meeting). This will help us to identify solutions to support improvements in attendance OR review the supports and targets we put in place at our last child planning meeting.

I have enclosed some documents which might be helpful in formulating your views before the meeting.

If the above date is not suitable for you, please call us at the school to reschedule the meeting.

It is important for us to meet to have this discussion so that the situation does not continue to have an impact on (insert child / young person's name)'s learning and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely

Designation

School Name

## Appendix 9: Attendance Letter (2) - Young Person over 12 years

Dear (insert young person's name)

Further to my letter of (insert date) and our subsequent conversation / child planning meeting, I am writing to you as we are concerned about your continued pattern of poor / non-attendance.

According to our records, your attendance is now XX% over the past eight week period. I have enclosed a print out of your attendance record.

An appointment has been made for you and your parent to attend a child planning meeting on (insert date and time of meeting). This will help us to identify solutions to support improvements in attendance OR review the supports and targets we put in place at our last child planning meeting.

I have enclosed some documents which might be helpful in formulating your views before the meeting.

It is important for us to meet to have this discussion so that the situation does not continue to have an impact on your learning and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely

Designation

School Name

## Appendix 10: Attendance Letter (3) - Parent

Dear (insert parent name)

### Child / Young Person's Name

I am writing to you to highlight our ongoing concerns about (insert child / young person's name)'s continuing pattern of poor / non-attendance.

According to our records, (insert young person's name)'s attendance is now XX% over the past twelve week period. I have enclosed a print out of (insert child / young person's name)'s attendance record.

I would ask that you (and your child) attends a child planning meeting to discuss this with you and review the supports and targets we put in place at our last child planning meeting.

We will continue to seek to explore what can we do together to improve the situation and how we can help.

If following this meeting, there is no improvement in (insert child / young person's name)'s attendance we may consider a referral to East Lothian Council's Children's Services Department for advice and support. Social Work advice may be sought and/or a referral to the Children's Reporter may be considered in accordance with The Education (Scotland) Act 1980.

The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 allows for an education authority to require a parent to provide an explanation for non-attendance, if it believes there is not a reasonable excuse for non-attendance (section 36)

An appointment has been made for you (and your child) to meet with us on (insert date and time of meeting).

If the above date is not suitable for you, please call us at the school to reschedule the meeting.

I have enclosed some documents which might be helpful in formulating your views and (insert child / young person's name)'s views prior to the meeting.

It is important for us to meet to have this discussion so that the situation does not continue to have an impact on (insert child / young person's name)'s learning and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely

Designation

School Name

## Appendix 11: Attendance Letter (3) - Young Person over 12 Years

Dear (insert young person's name)

I am writing to you to highlight our ongoing concerns about your continuing pattern of poor / non-attendance.

According to our records, your attendance is now XX% over the past twelve week period. I have enclosed a print out of your attendance record.

I would ask that you and your parent attends a child planning meeting to discuss this with you and review the supports and targets we put in place at our last child planning meeting.

We will continue to seek to explore what can we do together to improve the situation and how we can help.

If following this meeting, there is no improvement in your attendance we may consider a referral to other agencies for their advice and support.

An appointment has been made for you and your parent to meet with us on (insert date and time of meeting).

I have enclosed some documents which might be helpful in formulating your views prior to the meeting.

It is important for us to meet to have this discussion so that the situation does not continue to have an impact on your learning and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely

Designation

School Name

## Appendix 12: School Attendance Self-Evaluation Toolkit

HGIOS (4) Category	QI Link	Reflective Statements	What are the current strengths in this area? (Evaluative statements based upon impact upon learners)	What key evidence do you have of improvement in this area? (Triangulation of evidence: Views / Observation / Data)	What are we going to do now?
<b>Leadership &amp; Management</b>	1.1	Through ongoing self-evaluation we understand attendance patterns in our school.			
	1.1	We systematically gather data to monitor and track the attendance of individual children / young people.			
	1.2	Our staff routinely engage in career-long professional learning (CLPL) to understand key guidance such as GIRFEC and the UNCRC and how this relates to school attendance and the right to an education.			
	1.1	We are guided by local and national policies, guidance and legislation around school attendance and a child's right to an education.			

HGIOS (4) Category	QI Link	Reflective Statements	What are the current strengths in this area? (Evaluative statements based upon impact upon learners)	What key evidence do you have of improvement in this area? (Triangulation of evidence: People's views / Observation / Data)	What are we going to do now?
<b>Learning Provision</b>	2.1	We have clear policies and procedures in relation to child protection and safeguarding and all staff understand the importance of attendance in relation to keeping children and young people safe.			
	2.1	Children and young people have a named education contact with whom they discuss any personal issues or concerns which may impact on their attendance.			
	2.1	Children and young people feel safe in school. There are a variety of supports for them such as buddying and safe havens. We evaluate the impact of these supports.			
	2.2	Our curriculum design supports the engagement of children and young people.			
	2.2	We have flexible learner pathways building on key curriculum design principles such as personalisation and choice, challenge and enjoyment and relevance to encourage good attendance.			

	2.2	We work with partners to develop bespoke curricular approaches for children / young people at risk of not attending.			
	<b>QI Link</b>	<b>Reflective Statements</b>	<b>What are the current strengths in this area? (Evaluative statements based upon impact upon learners)</b>	<b>What key evidence do you have of improvement? (Triangulation of evidence: Views / Observation / Data)</b>	<b>What are we going to do now?</b>
	2.3	Our school culture reflects an ethos of Children's Rights and positive relationships and this encourages children / young people's attendance at school.			
	2.4	All children and young people benefit from high-quality universal support which engages them in their learning.			
	2.4	We understand that poor attendance is a factor giving rise to additional support needs. We use the Child's Planning Framework to support good attendance.			
	2.4	We are proactive at responding to the needs of our most vulnerable children / young people including those with care experience and in poverty. We minimise their barriers to good school attendance.			
	2.5	We promote family learning for all of the families in our school community to bridge the gap between home and school.			

	2.5	Where appropriate, we work with and signpost families to services which support good school attendance.			
	2.6	We plan transitions carefully to ensure that children and young people and their families are fully supported and that key information is shared. This allows us to intervene early when attendance is of concern.			
<b>HGIOS (4) Category</b>	<b>QI Link</b>	<b>Reflective Statements</b>	<b>What are the current strengths in this area? (Evaluative statements based upon impact upon learners)</b>	<b>What key evidence do you have of improvement? (Triangulation of evidence: Views / Observation / Data)</b>	<b>What are we going to do now?</b>
<b>Successes and Achievements</b>	3.1	We can evidence wellbeing entitlements for all of our children and young people. We use local and national policies, guidance and legislation to support us with this.			
	3.1	We have evidence to demonstrate that the steps we have taken to improve the attendance of individuals has had a positive impact.			
	3.1	We celebrate diversity and challenge all forms of discrimination to create an inclusive learning environment.			
	3.3	Children and young people have the opportunity to connect their learning and acquisition of skills to the world of work in order that			



		they can appreciate the relevance of their learning opportunities.			
	3.2	We ensure that the provision of part-time timetables is used only when necessary, is recorded appropriately and reviewed at regular intervals.			
	3.2	We provide suitable learning resources for children and young people who cannot attend school and check in with them regularly.			
	3.2	We make regular contact with home for children and young people who are not attending or have poor school attendance and ensure we regularly review the child's planning framework that is in place for them.			



**REPORT TO:** Education Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 23 November 2021

**BY:** Executive Director for Education and Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Update on Implementation of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To update Education Committee on the full implementation of 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare in East Lothian.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note:
- i. The Education Service has now fully implemented the expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours and that COVID-19 restrictions and mitigations continue to impact on the flexibility. Note the way in which provision over the traditional summer break in 5 local authority nurseries was managed and received by parents and the increased opportunities made available to staff through enhanced training opportunities leading to career development and progression.
  - ii. The plans to review the implementation of the policy and to seek feedback from parents, carers and staff. Note the very successful cross-service collaboration which supported the implementation of the policy.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 A full update on progress with the implementation of the expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours was provided to Education Committee on 8 June 2021. This report seeks to confirm that the Education Service has now implemented the policy and provides an update on the planned next steps.

- 3.2 In preparation for the full implementation, the Council created an 1140 hours website, providing detailed information for parents and carers on both the 38- and 48-week models available across the county. The information provided included both local authority nurseries and funded providers to ensure that parents and carers could access appropriate information to inform their choice of provider and also how they could access a 'blended model' if required.
- 3.3 The impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing mitigations has meant that some restrictions have remained in place, particularly a limit to the number of children in any one cohort and staff not moving between cohorts of children, or different settings in any one day. In addition, enhanced cleaning has been required and specifically between cohorts of children attending the nursery. The Council has plans in place to ensure that there could be continuity for children if the restrictions were further increased during the course of the year and to avoid displacing any children.

### 3.4 **Update**

- 3.4.1 Following the early implementation of the 1140 hour 48-week model at Haddington, St Mary's, Letham Mains, Dunbar and Sanderson's Wynd, parents with children attending these nurseries were offered places during the school summer break. Whilst take up in some nurseries was lower than expected, this gave staff the opportunity to settle into the new work pattern, plan for the new session and provided opportunities and experiences for the children which differed from those available during term time, for example off site visits in the local community. The opening of these nurseries during the summer also provided the opportunity to trial new systems and processes ahead of the start of session 2021/2022. Meetings with staff working over the summer have provided valuable feedback on the successes and challenges of this model. In addition, the feedback provided by Head Teachers and practitioners has helped inform planning and changes for October.

Informal feedback from parents has indicated the benefits a 48-week model has to offer. In particular, parents have commented positively about being able to continue in work without having to worry about childcare, the continuation of routines for young children, the range of different activities and experiences and having a meal provided.

- 3.4.2 The Council has a range of responsibilities in regard to Criteria 1 of the National Standard - Staffing Leadership and Management, and provides an appropriate induction programme and professional learning opportunities for all local authority staff throughout their careers.
- 3.4.3 In recent years, new roles have been introduced that offer progression for early years staff to progress in their career. Professional Learning opportunities exist at all levels, with staff starting their career at Support Worker level given the support and opportunities they require to progress and gain qualifications to further their careers. Those working at a more senior level have been given the opportunity to attend the Management and Leadership course devised and implemented by the Early Learning and Childcare Support Team. This provides an opportunity for existing staff to further develop their knowledge, skills and confidence in preparation for a move to senior posts within the sector.

3.4.4 Opportunities also exist for staff working in the private, voluntary and independent sector. These include twilight sessions devised and facilitated by the Support Team and workshops provided by colleagues within the Council and outside organisations.

3.4.5 As a guarantor of quality, East Lothian Council has a responsibility to ensure that all settings, including funded providers, meet and maintain the National Standards as they offer the extended hours. Quality assurance and improvement continues to be a key focus for this academic session.

The Early Learning and Childcare support team is carrying out monitoring visits for all settings over the coming months.

Our newly developed quality assurance guidance, which aims to support staff in improving standards and outcomes for young children, will be used during these visits. Settings falling short of the standard expected will be offered additional support and visits to help them achieve and maintain the standard

3.4.6 The Council is keen to take stock on the implementation of the expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours and to gather feedback from parents/carers and staff. We intend to seek feedback via a questionnaire on the Council's Consultation Hub "Have your Say", early in 2022. Those parents who are not able to access the questionnaire online will be able to request paper copies to complete. The consultation will be widely advertised through social media, local authority nurseries and via our funded providers. This timeline gives parents the opportunity to settle into the individual models of 1140 hours, and for those starting at the beginning of the academic year 2021-22 to have, where provided, experience of the extended weeks. Draft questions for the survey for parents and carers are attached at Appendix A. Survey questions for staff are currently being developed.

3.4.7 The proposed timeline for consultation also gives time for responses to be collated, and information provided will be used to inform any future changes to the models being offered. Any changes to the model being provided in a setting will be dependent on the removal of COVID restrictions and also the demand for places in that area. Any changes to the model will also need to be met from within the funding provided by the Scottish Government.

3.4.8 Since the inception of the 1140 hours programme, the Project Board has provided very effective oversight of the implementation of 1140 hours, and through regular meetings, has found solutions to the many challenges posed throughout the years. The Project Board has proved to be an efficient and successful way of keeping all parties informed of progress whilst providing opportunities for open discussion, support and challenge. The Project Board has also benefitted from the involvement of a Scottish Government official who has acted as a 'critical friend'.

3.4.9 Given that the expansion has now been fully implemented, the Project Board will be stood down. Matters relating to building works that are still being completed will be considered by the Learning Estate Senior Managers' group as appropriate. In addition, the project team which was the operational group reporting to the board have also concluded their work. This group has been a cross-service working group and has benefitted from the opportunity to

collaborate and problem solve throughout the development of the programme in a truly 'One-Council' approach.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

3.5.1 Despite the significant challenges presented over the years, with COVID being the most significant, East Lothian Council has delivered the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to 1140 hours, by the statutory timescale of August 2021. To date all children who wish to access extended hours have been offered the opportunity to do so.

We will continue to review our models during school session 2021/2022 and seek feedback from staff and parents which will support us in making any improvements for the following session.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

## **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Financial – The expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours has been delivered within the financial allocation from the Scottish Government.

6.2 Personnel –Centre Managers, Senior Early Years Practitioners, Early Years Practitioners and Support Workers have been recruited to ensure that the correct staffing ratios are in place and are maintained.

6.3 Other – none.

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None

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<b>DATE</b>	23 November 2021

## **Appendix A. – draft Survey Questions for parents/carers**

### ***About you and your child***

Your Name (optional)

Your Child's Name (optional)

Nursery/Funded provider your child attends

Is your child receiving 1140hours as:

- An eligible 2 year old
- A child aged between 3 & 5 years

Do you (tick all that apply):

- 'Blend' across more than one setting
- Pay for additional hours above your 1140hours entitlement

### ***About the model***

We're keen to know how 1140hours is working for our parents and carers. This section will ask you questions about the model/pattern of hours that your child attends early learning and childcare.

Do you use a (tick all that apply)

- Local authority 38 week model
- Local authority 48 week model
- Partner nursery
- Partner community group
- Partner childminder

When choosing where your child would attend, did you make your decision based on:

- The setting only
- The model only
- A mixture of model and setting
- Other

I am happy with the model of childcare that I receive

- Agree
- Disagree
- Other

Is there anything else you about the model that you would like to share with us?

[space for comments]

### **Settings**

We want to know how well our settings support 1140hours. If your child attends more than one setting (for example, as a blended model) please answer for the place where they spend most time. You can use the comments box to share information on the second provider if you wish.

What factors influenced your decision to send your child to the setting they attend? Please tick all that apply:

- The model suited me best
- The location suited me best
- The type of setting suited me best – for example, a childminder
- It is our catchment primary school
- I have other child(ren) already at this setting
- Other (please explain)

Does your child receive their 1140 hours across more than one setting?

- Yes
- No
- Other

Is there anything else you about the setting that you would like to share with us?

[space for comments]

### **Aims of 1140hours**

We are keen to know how 1140 hours in East Lothian supports the Scottish Government’s aims for its introduction.

My child receives high-quality early learning and childcare

- Yes
- No
- Other

The extra funded hours have allowed me to (tick all that apply):

- Increase my hours at work
- Access employment
- Undertake training
- Return to education
- Reduce my childcare costs
- None of the above
- Other (please explain)



I was able to choose whether to take my hours at a council setting or with a partner nursery, childminder or community group

- Yes
- No
- Other

Is there anything else you wish to feed back to us about 1140 hours of early learning and childcare in East Lothian?

[space for comments]



**REPORT TO:** Education Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 23 November 2021

**BY:** Executive Director for Education & Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Scottish Government Consultation on Education Reform

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6

## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Scottish Government consultation on Education Reform.
- 1.2 To seek approval to submit the draft response (Appendix 1) on behalf of East Lothian Council.

## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
  - i. Note the scope and remit of the consultation on Education Reform being carried out by Professor Kenneth Muir, on behalf of the Scottish Government; and
  - ii. Approve the content of the draft response at Appendix 1 and also that it will be submitted to the Scottish Government by 26 November 2021.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report *Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future* in June 2021 [Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future | en | OECD](#). This report recognised that Curriculum for Excellence offers an inspiring and widely supported philosophy of education. It acknowledged the hard work done over the years by many in Scottish education to turn the vision for Curriculum for Excellence and the refreshed narrative into meaningful learning for children and young people at all stages. Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future also highlighted the need for a

more structured and strategic approach to curriculum review and implementation in Scotland, noting in particular that the structure, learning practices and assessment approaches in the Senior Phase need adapting to be consistent with Curriculum for Excellence's vision to allow for a smooth curriculum experience from 3 to 18 and beyond.

- 3.2 In its response to the OECD report *Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future* in June 2021, the Scottish Government announced its decision that the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) would be replaced and that the functions of Education Scotland would be reviewed with the removal of the Inspectorate from its remit and the establishment of a separate curriculum and assessment body and inspectorate.
- 3.3 Professor Kenneth Muir, former Chief Executive of the General Teaching Council for Scotland and Chief Inspector of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, has been appointed as independent advisor to the Scottish Government on the replacement of the SQA and the reform of Education Scotland.
- 3.4 A consultation on this reform was launched towards the end of September and will run until 26 November 2021. All key stakeholders, including local authorities are being encouraged to respond. It is expected that Professor Muir will report back to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills early in 2022.
- 3.5 The context for this consultation will focus on:
- Vision
  - Curriculum and Assessment
  - Roles and Responsibilities
  - Replacing the Scottish Qualifications Authority and reforming Education Scotland

### 3.6 **The East Lothian Response**

Following the launch of the consultation at the end of September, a short-life working group was established which was chaired by the Executive Director – Education and Children's Services and included the Head of Education, Education Senior Managers, Quality Improvement Officers and both primary and secondary Head Teachers. The group considered all aspects of the consultation and drew on the views of the wider education community in East Lothian to formulate the draft response.

- 3.7 Within section 1, the consultation response provides support for the existing vision for Curriculum for Excellence but highlights a number of issues around its implementation. Specifically, the response highlights a lack of clarity on the expectations on practitioners in using the Experiences and Outcomes and the complexity of the range of advice, guidance and documentation that have been produced by Scottish Government and Education Scotland over the years.

- 3.8 The working group have considered carefully the specific questions relating to curriculum and assessment within section 2 of the consultation. The response highlights the need for a stronger national focus on transitions and particularly for those learners moving from primary to secondary and for those progressing beyond S3 in to the Senior Phase. In addition, the response also highlights the need for a national approach to the range of qualifications on offer, highlighting the risk of inconsistency across schools in Scotland.
- 3.9 Section 3 of the consultation, focuses on Roles and Responsibilities and seeks views on the range of reforms planned for both Education Scotland and the SQA. The consultation response seeks to highlight what would be of most benefit to school staff (and learners) and also possible risks associated with this type of reform.
- 3.10 Whilst the consultation does not have a direct bearing on the role of the local authority, it is worth noting that there is some mention of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives and the role of Education Scotland in providing direct support to school staff. The response seeks to highlight that there is a need for any national school support to be delivered alongside the local authority and by staff who have current expertise and skills and can provide support to practitioners that impacts positively on learners and manages teacher workload.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None

#### **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – none
- 6.2 Personnel – none
- 6.3 Other – none

#### **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None

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<b>DATE</b>	November 2021

# Education Reform Consultation

**Consultation on Behalf of Professor Ken Muir, University of the West of Scotland and Independent Advisor to the Scottish Government**

## **CONTEXT FOR THIS CONSULTATION**

- 1. Vision**
- 2. Curriculum and Assessment**
- 3. Roles and Responsibilities**
- 4. Replacing the Scottish Qualifications Authority and reforming Education Scotland**

## SECTION 1 - VISION

Two decades have passed since the original vision for Curriculum for Excellence was set out. In 2019, a revised narrative on Curriculum for Excellence was published which aimed to update the original vision<sup>12</sup>. Since the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence, there have been marked changes in educational research giving rise to new insights into children and young people's learning, pedagogy, and the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes students need to progress as learners.

*“Scotland’s curriculum – Curriculum for Excellence – helps our children and young people gain the knowledge, skills and attributes needed for life in the 21st century.”*  
[Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence \(scotlandscurriculum.scot\)](http://scotlandscurriculum.scot)

**As an introduction to the questions which follow in this consultation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?**

**1.1 The vision for Curriculum for Excellence reflects what matters for the education of children and young people in Scotland.**

*Strongly Agree*

***Agree***

*Neither Agree/Disagree*

*Disagree*

*Strongly Disagree*

1.2 What do you think should be retained and/or changed?

In theory Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) offers a coherent and flexible learning experience for children in the early years through to those at the end of secondary school and this should be retained. We support this overarching vision but acknowledge its core purpose may have been lost over the years as demands for more detail and greater exemplification from practitioners became stronger. Over the years concerns regarding the lack of detail had the unintended consequence of increasing bureaucracy and paperwork both nationally and locally, for example the Experiences & Outcomes, Benchmarks, Building the Curriculum frameworks, IT systems to monitor and track learner progress. This has led to inconsistent implementation across Scotland and over-complexity which at times could be open to interpretation. Currently CfE expects school leaders and teachers to construct, develop, deliver and review the curriculum in the context of their own school yet they are expected to have assessment and moderation in place that is consistent across all 32 Local Authorities. This, at times, has led to a lack of coherence and a drive for the curriculum to satisfy the needs of assessment rather than learners' needs themselves.

We would wish the vision of CfE to be retained with stronger national oversight and support for curriculum design and delivery to allow teachers to focus on delivering learning in their classrooms. Current national guidance should be simplified and streamlined with a stronger focus on a true understanding of the nationally agreed



expectations for each level. Greater consideration needs to be given to the senior phase as currently the main driver is towards high stakes exams and therefore the essence and intent of CfE is not fully realised and at times is diluted.

The vision, with the focus on the needs of the whole child and what they need to be successful in the future, is what we aspire to but the interpretation and implementation of that vision may well be very different across Scotland and may not serve the needs of all learners consistently well. In addition, what was intended from the original vision may now need to be updated in terms of the outcomes we would expect to see achieved from this vision. The world is now a very different place since the inception of CfE and there is a need to ensure the vision and focus is up to date with the needs of learners.

Whilst not specifically about the vision per se, we are of the view that the importance of the 'four capacities' and the 'four contexts for learning' have been lost in the complexity and bureaucracy of the experiences and outcomes. There also needs to be a renewed focus on CfE being about the needs of all learners including those with complex additional support needs. The aspirations of CfE being fully inclusive for all is dependent on practitioners, schools and local authorities.

<sup>12</sup> [Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence \(scotlandscurriculum.scot\)](http://scotlandscurriculum.scot)

## SECTION 2 - CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

The OECD reports *Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future*<sup>13</sup> and *Upper-Secondary Education Student Assessment in Scotland: A Comparative Perspective*<sup>14</sup> make it clear that aligning curriculum, qualifications and system evaluation is essential to delivering on the commitments made in Curriculum for Excellence relating to assessment.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**2.1 Curriculum for Excellence provides a coherent progression in the journey of learners (3-18 and beyond) that gives them the best possible educational experience and enables them to realise their ambitions.**

*Strongly Agree*

***Agree***

*Neither Agree/Disagree*

*Disagree*

*Strongly Disagree*

2.2 Please share what you believe currently contributes to a coherent progression.

The aspirations of Curriculum for Excellence, as defined in the policy intent, seek to provide a 3-18 framework that builds on prior learning. The implementation of a coherent progression that provides the best possible educational experience is dependent on skilled practitioners who know their learners well. Having absolute clarity about the skills, knowledge and attributes being developed and the expected achievement is essential to ensuring a coherent progression. The debate over the years has focussed heavily on skills development and the acquisition of knowledge alongside that has been lost. We are of the view that there needs to be greater national clarity on what we mean by coherent progression. Learner achievement and progression is not linear and yet the volume and complexity of Curriculum for Excellence can lead to a linear and box ticking approach to its implementation.

Ensuring a coherent progression from the start of the early level and throughout all learner stages in their journey is absolutely essential. Too often there are false starts, duplication and inconsistency in curriculum transitions that hampers the intended progression. One particular area that needs much greater national focus is in relation to the curricular transitions for learners moving from P7 to S1. This continues to be a challenge despite it being highlighted as needing improvement over many years. In addition, greater clarity is required in the transition from the Broad General Education at the end of S3 in to the senior phase. At the moment the models in place across all of Scotland are inconsistent and further clarity on the expectations is needed to avoid detriment to learners due to the curriculum model and course choices in place in the school they attend.

### 2.3 Please share ideas you may have to improve learner progression across stages and sectors.

The Experiences and Outcomes are overly complicated and onerous and many practitioners have spent long periods of time trying to understand them, often focussing on the content of what to teach rather than the pedagogy of how to teach and how best to meet learners' needs. It would appear that the benchmarks have been more useful and we believe that there must be a simplifying and decluttering in order to support learner progression. There is still too much of 'reinventing the wheel' and insufficient practical support for practitioners in the classroom on what strong learner progression looks like.

We believe that there needs to be a much stronger focus on the early level and its core foundations for learning at all other stages. This also reflects the range of providers and practitioners who may be providing learning. Greater national support for all practitioners, including those who may not be teachers is essential.

The swathes of guidance and advice notes has served to confuse practitioners. There needs to be a radical review of all advice to simplify it and demystify it for practitioners with the focus on what will improve outcomes for learners.

**3.1 In practice, learning communities are empowered and use the autonomy provided by Curriculum for Excellence to design a curriculum that meets the needs of their learners.**

*Strongly Agree*

**Agree**

*Neither Agree/Disagree*

*Disagree*

*Strongly Disagree*

**3.2 Please share ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance this in future.**

The ability of all schools to review and update their curriculum rationale based on their context and to meet the needs of their learners has been welcomed. There needs to be greater articulation between curriculum rationale and empowerment at a local level and whether this is resulting in improved outcomes for all. There needs to be further clarification on the accountability and responsibility associated with this autonomy that does not result in an inspection, tick box exercise.

Increased national guidance and support needs to be focussed on the needs of children and young people with additional support needs who need a significantly differentiated curriculum focussed on outcomes that will support them as adults (often life skills). This has been lacking over the years and often seen as an afterthought.

**4.1 The creation of a Curriculum and Assessment Agency will help to address the misalignment of curriculum and assessment as outlined in the OECD report<sup>15</sup>.**

*Strongly Agree*

*Agree*

***Neither Agree/Disagree***

*Disagree*

*Strongly Disagree*

**4.2 Please share your views of the potential advantages of establishing such an Agency.**

The creation of a new agency will not address any misalignment on its own. It will be a welcome development to have a stronger focus on curriculum and assessment but this will only be successful if the agency has access to highly skilled curriculum leaders and developers who have current experience of what works.

Improved specific curricular support to Local Authorities and schools will be welcomed especially if this also includes hands on support in classes that seeks to build capacity of practitioners and provide support that reduces workload. It will be essential that this new agency works alongside local authorities to complement their work and avoids any unnecessary duplication or confusion.

The new agency must have strong links to academic research and evidence of 'what works'.

4.3 Please share your views of the potential disadvantages of establishing such an Agency.

The time that will be required to establish the agency and to develop its plans will be significant. Meanwhile this has the potential to distract and detract from providing high quality support on the ground to teachers. There is also a danger that establishing this agency could be another bureaucratic 'quango' that makes little difference to children's experiences on the ground.

**5.1 The full breadth of existing SQA qualifications<sup>16</sup> play an important part of the curriculum offered by secondary schools.**

*Strongly Agree*

***Agree***

*Neither Agree/Disagree*

*Disagree*

*Strongly Disagree*

5.2 Please identify the main factors, if any, that support a broader range of SQA qualifications being included in the curriculum in secondary schools.

The range of SQA qualifications and SCQF awards are wide ranging. These have the potential to support learners' interests, needs and future career aspirations. Often qualifications being delivered are not sufficiently flexible to support labour market intelligence and systems, budgets and staffing in schools do not lend themselves to a flexible approach to the range of qualifications on offer. We believe that it is essential there continues to be a strong link to developing skills for learning, life and work. This is sometimes lost when schools are fighting against the public and media clamour for qualifications in more traditional and core subjects and to the creation of league tables. The focus must be on what is in the best interests for the individual learner for their future and not qualifications as an end in themselves.

5.3 Please share any ideas you may have on what is needed to enhance the role of a broader variety of qualifications in the curriculum in secondary schools.

Significant work is needed on reporting measures and what we value – using a broader range of qualifications won't work if schools are only measured on English and Maths and what is deemed to be 'good' Highers (at a level 6 qualification). There must be parity of esteem that focusses on the needs and aspirations of all learners and their future destinations. This is especially important for learners with a disability or additional support needs.

Providing a broader range of qualifications is dependent on appropriate staffing and budgets. Too often, smaller class sizes and 'minority' subjects cannot be delivered due to lack of appropriately qualified staff and class sizes that are too small to be viable. In order to overcome this, we must embrace national and local digital learning platforms which would allow for groups of learners to be taught across schools and Local Authorities.

Curriculum planning and architecture needs to be a major focus. Without sufficient clarity and high quality support, schools have often resorted to what they know in terms of timetabling. Despite the best efforts of school staff and the range of qualifications available from SQA, rigid timetabling and the column structure approach can result in missed opportunities and more limited opportunities for learners to achieve in terms of the original aspirations of CfE.

## **6.1 Technologies are fully and appropriately utilised as a support for curriculum and assessments.**

*Strongly Agree*

*Agree*

*Neither Agree/Disagree*

***Disagree***

*Strongly Disagree*

6.2 Please share any comments you may have on the use of technologies to support curriculum and assessments, and what could be done to deliver improvements.

Whilst there has been a rapid increase and improvement in the provision of digital devices during COVID-19 and remote learning episodes, there now needs to be a review of their effectiveness. We need to guard against an overly simplistic view that providing one to one devices will solve everything. Learning technologies needs to be much more than laptops and in order to be successful, needs to come with a very high quality practitioner learning and development programme that explores the possibilities around curriculum delivery and how to adapt learning, teaching and assessment accordingly. There is also the need to understand that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there has been a greater move towards online content, packaged applications and subscription services. Learners would benefit from accessing resources that could be nationally procured and accessed through the "Glow platform".

Schools would also benefit greatly from national investment in infrastructure to

provide the highest quality of internet and increased bandwidth. This would allow students to truly engage in collaborative and innovative types of activities which most devices are now capable of.

There needs to be far greater genuine sharing of practice across Scotland with a focus on building capacity and not reinventing the wheel. Greater understanding and pedagogy is required with respect to using digital devices to meet the needs of learners with additional support needs. There is also the need to review how assessment looks across our education system and to make better use of technology as part of this. This is particularly the case for exams in the senior phase.

### **7. Please share any additional comments you have on curriculum and assessment.**

Whilst we are supportive of the vision, as originally intended for CfE, it is worth reiterating that we are of the view that the essence and policy intent has to some extent been lost in the myriad of bureaucratic documents, guidance, advice notes and directives which in some cases confuses rather than supports teachers. The complexity of the experiences and outcomes and how they should be used has led to some teachers feeling deskilled and spending more time on 'bundling' them than looking at what best meets the needs of their learners. In order to be successful, there needs to be greater clarity and coherence in national messaging that has the needs of learners and practitioners at its heart.

We also believe that there needs to continue to be greater trust and reliance on teacher professional judgement and its importance and place alongside absolute clarity in standards. There have been some positive developments in this regard but there needs to be much stronger national messaging centred on our belief that our staff know their learners and have the skills to plan learning, teaching and assessment that best meets their needs.

A stronger and more equitable focus needs to be given to curriculum and assessment at all stages of the learner journey. Early level and primary have got lost as the focus for too long has been on senior phase and to a lesser extent the Broad General Education in secondary – how effective is the curriculum in early learning and childcare and primary and how do we know?

There needs to be a refocussing on the four capacities as being the definition of what we are trying to deliver for our learners.

## **SECTION 3 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The rationale for reform of Scottish education is to ensure that learning communities get the best possible support to provide the highest quality of learning and teaching for our children and young people. The aim is to continue to reduce the attainment gap and reduce variability in outcomes achieved by young people in different parts of

the country.

*Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future*<sup>17</sup> recognises the complexity in Scottish education and highlights duplication of functions between different groups. It is claimed that this reduces clarity and consistency for practitioners and points to the need for Scotland's system leaders and stakeholders to revise the current allocation of responsibility for Curriculum for Excellence, including responsibilities for its strategic direction, its reviews and updates, and the response to needs and/or requests for support with curriculum issues.

A key challenge in improving the transparency of responsibilities and accountability mechanisms surrounding Curriculum for Excellence is in ensuring that the functions of agencies are designed in a way that maximises support for achieving excellence and equity for all children and young people from the early level upwards.

Building on a commitment to shared ownership of Curriculum for Excellence, the report therefore points to the need for improved clarity on functions and simplification of guidance for all stakeholders in order that the system is more coherent and more easily understood by all, allowing a greater focus on learning and teaching.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

**8.1 There is clarity on where the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence lie.**

*Strongly Agree*  
*Agree*  
*Neither Agree/Disagree*  
***Disagree***  
*Strongly Disagree*

8.2 Please indicate where you think the responsibilities for the strategic direction, review and updates for Curriculum for Excellence should lie.

At a national level, there is currently a lack of clarity on the strategic responsibilities for curriculum development. Scottish Government officials, whilst holding policy responsibility often have no education background and rely on Education Scotland to provide educational advice. This leads to a lack of clarity and a perception that there are too many masters with no-one truly understanding the experience on the ground. Given that Local Authorities hold the statutory duty to provide sufficient education, then there needs to be much greater collaboration and trust between national and local government.

<sup>17</sup> [Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future | en | OECD](#)

**9.1 There is clarity on the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs for support with curriculum and assessment issues.**

*Strongly Agree*  
*Agree*  
*Neither Agree/Disagree*  
***Disagree***

*Strongly Disagree*

9.2 Please share which aspects of the support currently provided by national agencies and other providers is working well.

Support that is developed by practitioners and school leaders for each other is most effective. Most recently this has been via school and local authority staff who are supporting the priorities of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives.

9.3 Please indicate where you think greater clarity is needed in relation to the roles played by national agencies and other providers for responding to needs / requests for support with curriculum and assessment issues.

Whilst national agencies such as Education Scotland publicly state that they are focussed on direct support and responding to needs, there has been a lack of visibility and real action on the ground during the pandemic. Demands for information from Scottish Government have been frequent with little offer of practical support in schools where the need has been. Practitioners report that it often feels like Education Scotland are more focussed on persuading the public they are of value than doing anything that supports them on the ground. Practitioners and school leaders are not clear on where to go for support and it appears to be more of a competition than a genuine attempt to support improvement.

Support from Education Scotland on curriculum and assessment issues is very inconsistent. Whilst we have had some excellent support from our attainment advisor, other support for example in other curricular areas has been lacking. If the vehicle for providing support is to continue to be through the RICs then there needs to be a minimal expectation of what will be provided and we would suggest a form of Service Level Agreement.

There is a lack of detailed national understanding and knowledge of what is happening on the ground in a local authority. Education Scotland removed previous roles where there was a support and challenge function (District Inspectors) and replaced with Senior Regional Advisors whose role is unclear and at times appears to be more of a post box for requests for information from SG. Engagement and support is intermittent – often lots then followed by nothing. LA officers would not rely on national agencies to have the skills available to provide real and helpful support as so few officers working in national agencies have experience of working in senior roles in a local authority. LAs have very much appreciated and valued the support of ADES, especially during the pandemic where advice and support has been frequent, responsive and practical.

**10.1 There is clarity on where high quality support for leadership and professional learning can be accessed to support practitioners.**

*Strongly Agree*

**Agree**

*Neither Agree/Disagree*



*Disagree*  
*Strongly Disagree*

10.2 Please share any comments you may have on support for leadership and professional learning.

East Lothian has very strong professional learning and leadership programmes with strong partnership working with the GTCS. In East Lothian, practitioners would be more likely to approach local authority officers in the first instance. Support from Education Scotland is too complicated to navigate and often demonstrates a lack of real understanding of the job being done by teachers on the ground.

Newly appointed Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers who are now studying for the mandatory Into Headship qualification have reported intolerable pressure in undertaking this level of study, with the demands of the pandemic and often when taking on a new head teacher post. Further consideration must be given to balancing the mandatory professional qualifications of Head Teachers and their overall wellbeing, particularly at this time.

**11.1 There is sufficient trust with all stakeholders, including children, young people, parents & carers, so they are genuinely involved in decision making.**

*Strongly Agree*  
*Agree*  
***Neither Agree/Disagree***  
*Disagree*  
*Strongly Disagree*

15

11.2 Please share any ideas you may have on how trust and decision making can be further improved.

There is strong trust at a local level where local authority officers including school staff, learners, parents and communities work well together. Head Teachers make every effort to understand their communities and to involve them meaningfully in the life and work of the school.

Further work needs to be done to build trust between Scottish Government and national agencies and Local Authorities and schools where decision making is done in the spirit of collaboration, respect and what is in the best interests of children, families and communities. Communication at times is poor and often LA officers are last to find out about a new initiative or development.

**12.1 Independent inspection has an important role to play in scrutiny and evaluation, enhancing improvement and building capacity.**

*Strongly Agree*  
***Agree***  
*Neither Agree/Disagree*  
*Disagree*  
*Strongly Disagree*

12.2 Please give examples of how you would like to see scrutiny and evaluation being carried out in future.

Independent evaluation and scrutiny is necessary in any education system and seeks to provide public assurance. This has been well documented over many years and evidenced in international research. Approaches to future scrutiny need to continue to build on 'working with' and be focussed on improvement and building capacity.

HM Inspectors should consider expanding the use of Associate Assessors to ensure the experience of the inspectorate is current and this also builds capacity in those taking part. Practitioners report that many inspectors have not worked in either a school or a local authority for some time and yet they routinely judge current practice, having never implemented it themselves. This is very true of the experience of the pandemic. Involving local authority officers in inspection teams would also demonstrate trust and support improvement.

The Collaborative Improvement model, introduced by ADES, should be fully supported as it has the potential to provide current support and expertise to local authorities by other LA officers. Consideration should be given to reintroducing a District Inspector role carried out by H M Inspectors.

### **13. Please share any additional comments on roles and responsibilities in Scotland's education system.**

ADES – further work should be done to support collaboration amongst local authorities. There has been significant progress, particularly during the pandemic, of this type of collaborative improvement and it is this type of work that will have the greatest impact.

Further and Higher Education – greater connectivity is required between the school sector and the FE and HE sectors. There has been much good work done between schools / LAs and colleges and this now needs to be consolidated. Links with HE are much patchier (other than for Teacher education) and there is a distinct lack of alignment between what schools and LAs are aspiring to for their learners and the entry expectations of HE institutions. Until this is resolved schools will be more limited in terms of the types of qualifications they offer as a route to University.

## **SECTION 4 - REPLACING THE SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY AND REFORMING EDUCATION SCOTLAND**

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced in June 2021 the intention to replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and consider a new specialist agency for both curriculum and assessment while also taking forward reform of Education Scotland, including removing the function of inspection or scrutiny from the agency. This section seeks views on how best to take forward key aspects of the Cabinet Secretary's decision including:

- **Removing Scrutiny (Inspection and review) from Education Scotland • Further reform of Education Scotland**
- **Replacing SQA**
- **Considering the establishment of a new Curriculum and Assessment Agency**

While it is expected to take some time to establish new or revised national agencies, it is anticipated that they will have a key role in taking forward delivery of wider OECD recommendations. This would include embedding a refreshed vision for Curriculum for Excellence, defining indicators to understand progress across the four capacities, building curricular capacity, implementing new pedagogical and assessment practices, implementing approaches for internal assessment in determining qualifications, ensuring appropriate breadth and depth of learning through the Broad General Education<sup>18</sup> and in respect of the Senior Phase<sup>19</sup>, embedding a structured and long-term approach to implementation, effective stakeholder engagement and coherent communications.

To assist you in answering these questions, information on the current roles and functions carried out by SQA and Education Scotland are provided within the supporting documents section at <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781802014327/documents/>.

### **Removing Scrutiny (Inspection and review) from Education Scotland**

External scrutiny (inspection and review) plays a fundamental role in the overall drive to continue to improve education in Scotland for all of our children, young people and adult learners. HM Inspectors carry out independent, external evaluation of standards, quality and improvement with a clear focus on impact and outcomes for learners. The scrutiny programme covers all sectors from early learning and childcare to adult learning. The evidence gathered through observing practice at first hand identifies what is working well in our education system, including examples of highly effective practice, areas which are showing improvement and areas where further development is needed.

<sup>18</sup> [Broad general education | Scottish education system | Education Scotland](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Senior phase | Senior phase and beyond | Scottish education system | Education Scotland](#)

17

#### **14. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.**

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example what form should this agency take)
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example the development of a new national approach to inspection including alignment with other scrutiny functions)
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example whether the independence of the inspectorate could be jeopardised by change)
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

In removing scrutiny from Education Scotland and establishing it once more as a stand-alone organisation, care will need to be taken to learn from what went before. It will be important that this is not seen as a move back to the days of HMIE but that the new organisation seeks to learn from what has worked and also to review what has not. Over the years the scope of inspection has been extended and it will be important to reflect on the key functions of the organisation. Whilst the range of scrutiny functions of different sectors could be seen as a strength, at times they can also be seen to dilute the core functions of inspection of statutory education provided by nurseries and schools. In going forward, the new inspectorate body needs to be far clearer in terms of what (and who) it is for as it cannot and should not try to be all things to all people.

In considering how this reform is taken forward, it will be important to revisit the status of the organisation. As an Executive Agency of Scottish Government, there has long been the perception that inspection is not sufficiently independent. Consideration should be given to decoupling it from SG and also looking to align it with other scrutiny bodies. Much work has been done over the years on the back of the review by Professor Lorne Crerar looking at the burden of scrutiny. Alignment of scrutiny bodies has always been challenging given the range of legislation that underpins their core functions. This should not stop a further review being undertaken particularly with the Care Inspectorate where there is considerable overlap with inspection of early learning and childcare and also in the post – school landscape where other bodies may be better placed to review and inspect this provision.

Key to this will be to ensure that there is a continued focus on inspection for the purposes of improvement and building capacity and not inspection as an end in itself. To achieve that, the key principles of working with practitioners and providers must be retained. Form must follow function and in order to achieve this, the key purposes of scrutiny should be revisited in order to determine how scrutiny can add value to the system.

### **Further Reform of Education Scotland**

Beyond inspection Education Scotland is a broad organisation responsible for a range of important functions designed to support a number of parts of the Scottish Education system. These functions include directly supporting learning communities at local and regional levels, offering a wide range of professional learning and leadership development programmes and opportunities, Community Learning and Development (including the CLD Standards Council), supporting digital pedagogies and as the function of Registrar of Independent Schools.

**15. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on how the functions currently housed in Education Scotland could be reformed.**

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example which functions should continue to sit within a reformed Education Scotland, and are there any functions which could be carried out elsewhere)
- b) the opportunities reform could present (for example should more prominence be given to aspects of Education Scotland's role)
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example disruption of service to education establishments and settings)
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

18

The extension and expansion of the functions of Education Scotland in recent years has served to create a very complex and complicated organisation that is impossible to navigate for practitioners. It is now no longer clear what Education Scotland is for and the range of sectors and areas of Scottish education it covers, only serves to highlight this more. For example, the office of the Registrar for Independent Schools and the CLD Standards Council do not appear to align well with the functions of ES as an improvement body. Rather, they appear to be more about regulation. The expansion of the organisation beyond compulsory school education also has the potential of diluting its effectiveness.

Whilst much of the literature, mission statements and plans make clear what ES is for, the practice on the ground does not match that. For example, the experience of schools and local authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced a perception that ES is remote, not prepared to step in and provide practical support and that there has been very limited impact of its effectiveness during this crisis.

Whilst this reform takes place, there is a very real risk that the focus of ES becomes very insular and that any support being offered, for example collaboration with the RICS, could be interrupted. It is worth noting that the reform of HMIE and LTS in to one organisation took many years to navigate and lessons must be learned from that. Consideration should be given to a shadow organisation that would support some continuity of work whilst the reform takes place.

## **Replacing SQA**

SQA has two main roles: accreditation and awarding qualifications.

- **SQA Accreditation** accredits qualifications other than degrees and approves and quality assures awarding bodies that plan to enter people for these qualifications.
- **SQA Awarding Body** devises and develops national and vocational qualifications across schools, colleges, training providers and employers; sets standards and maintains such qualifications; validates qualifications (makes sure they are well written and meet the needs of learners and practitioners); reviews qualifications to ensure they are up to date; arranges for, assists in, and carries out, the assessment of people taking SQA qualifications; quality assures education and training establishments which offer SQA qualifications; and issues certificates to candidates.

Within both of these roles, SQA offers a range of services for businesses and

training providers, ranging from course and centre approval through customised awards, to endorsement, credit rating and licensing services.

**16. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.**

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example could a function be carried out elsewhere)
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example should more prominence be given to an aspect of SQA's role)
- c) the risks associated with any reform (for example loss of income, confusion as to system of awards in Scotland)
- d) how any risks might be mitigated
- e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

19

In reforming the SQA, consideration should be given to the role that other bodies, for example the SCQF partnership could play. There is a very real risk that if the role and functions stay the same then this will be little more than 'moving the deckchairs'. Given that form should follow function, it will be imperative that any review and changes to Curriculum for Excellence and the creation of a new curriculum and assessment agency then flows in to the reform of SQA. The nature and purpose of assessment and accreditation needs overhaul and the current systems in place are not fit for purpose. Any new agency needs to grasp this and be brave to take forward some radical redesign.

The new agency needs use some of the lessons learned from the last 18 months. The apparent lack of flexibility, defensiveness and a belief by practitioners that the organisation is now out of touch with reality in schools needs to be addressed.

**Considering the Establishment of a new Curriculum and Assessment Agency**

The establishment of new Agency has the potential to enhance the quality of teaching and learning across the education sector. It will be important that the remit, purpose, governance and culture of the new agency match the aspirations of the system it will be designed to serve. We are therefore interested in the role of the new agency, its relationship with other parts of the system including the Scottish Ministers and how we will know it has been successful.

**17. Please share any comments or suggestions you have on this proposed reform below.**

We are particularly interested in hearing your views on:

- a) the approach this reform should take (for example are there alternative models for this reform?)
- b) the opportunities these reforms could present (for example what should the

- role of the new agency be?)
- c) the risks associated with any reform
  - d) how any risks might be mitigated
  - e) the timescales over which these reforms should take place.

*\*\* Please see answer at 4.2 and 4.3 \*\**





**REPORT TO:** Education Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 23 November 2021

**BY:** Executive Director for Education and Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** School Session Dates - 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25

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7

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Education Committee's approval for School Session dates for the three school years, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
- i. Approve the school session dates for the three years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 as outlined in Appendix 1.
  - ii. Authorise the Head of Education to notify Scottish Government, Head Teachers, Teachers' Associations, Heads of Establishments and Parent Councils and approve delegated authority to the Head of Education, in consultation with the Council Leader and Convener of the Education Committee, to make any further changes if required to the session dates during the year.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 This year, following discussion with neighbouring authorities (City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council, Scottish Borders Council and Fife Council), East Lothian has prepared school session dates for the following three school years: 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. Engagement with neighbouring authorities to try and align our dates wherever possible proved challenging and by the time subsequent discussions took place, City of Edinburgh Council had already set dates for the next three academic sessions and had them approved;

Scottish Borders Council have set dates for the next two school years, namely 2022/23 and 2023/24 and Fife Council have also now set theirs for the next three years to 2024/25. Midlothian Council have still to set their dates. It was therefore decided that East Lothian would align our dates with City of Edinburgh Council dates for the next three years which has been the preference of the vast majority of respondents to our consultations in recent years.

3.2 In preparing the draft school session dates for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 the following points were taken into consideration:

- 190 pupil and 195 staff days which is a legal requirement in accordance with the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975 (as amended);
- A fixed one week break in the third week of October;
- The school session ending before the first full week of July
- 5 fixed in-service days; and
- Flexibility with the Easter break to allow for a natural end to Term 2.

3.3 In preparing the draft school session dates for 2022/23 to 2024/25 the five points in 3.2 were taken into account as outlined in the attached draft proposed dates (Appendix 1). Cognisance of the City of Edinburgh Council's session dates were taken into account in an attempt to align the dates, as far as possible. This has been achieved in relation to the main holiday periods.

3.4 The Education Service consultation on the proposed East Lothian session dates for 2022/23 to 2024/25 took place with Head Teachers, Teachers' Professional Associations, UNISON, Educational Establishments, Parent Councils and the wider community through the Council's Consultation Hub. The period of the consultation ran from 27 September 2021 until 18 October 2021.

3.5 The Education Service consultation asked for comments only in relation to the proposed East Lothian dates. A total of 55 responses to the consultation were received, all of which were from individuals. Of the 55 responses received, 33 commented that they were supportive of the proposed dates as they stood; 5 requested that the dates be aligned to other neighbouring authorities; 13 related to the timing and duration of the Christmas break. Other comments related to the timing and duration of the February, summer and October breaks and public holidays. Overall from the responses received, there was a significant majority who were supportive of the proposed dates and with them aligning with City of Edinburgh Council.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None.

## **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial - None  
6.2 Personnel - None  
6.3 Other - None

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 - draft school session dates 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

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<b>DATE</b>	19 October 2021



**EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL  
RESOURCES AND PEOPLE SERVICES  
SCHOOL SESSION DATES 2022-2023 - DRAFT**

<b>TERM 1</b>	Staff In-service Day 1	Monday	15	August	2022
	Staff In-service Day 2	Tuesday	16	August	2022
	Pupils Resume	Wednesday	17	August	2022
	Autumn Holiday (schools closed)	Friday	16	September	2022
	Autumn Holiday (schools closed)	Monday	19	September	2022
	All Return	Tuesday	20	September	2022
	All Break	Friday	14	October	2022
	Staff In-service Day 3	Monday	24	October	2022
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	25	October	2022
	Term Ends	Tuesday	20	December	2022
	<i>Term 1 = 82 pupil days Term 1 = 85 staff days</i>				
<b>TERM 2</b>	All Resume	Wednesday	4	January	2023
	All Break	Friday	10	February	2023
	Staff In-service Day 4	Monday	20	February	2023
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	21	February	2023
	All Break	Friday	31	March	2023
	Good Friday - 7 April 2023 Easter Monday – 10 April 2023  <i>Term 2 = 57 pupil days Term 2 = 58 staff days</i>				
<b>TERM 3</b>	All Resume (Staff and Pupils)	Monday	17	April	2023
	May Day (Schools closed)	Monday	1	May	2023
	All Resume	Tuesday	2	May	2023
	Staff In-Service Day 5 (pupil holiday)	Monday	22	May	2023
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	23	May	2023
	Term Ends  <i>Terms 3 = 51 pupil days Terms 3 = 52 staff days</i>	Wednesday	28	June	2023

**EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL  
RESOURCES AND PEOPLE SERVICES  
SCHOOL SESSION DATES 2023-2024 - DRAFT**

<b>TERM 1</b>	Staff In-service Day 1	Monday	14	August	2023
	Staff In-service Day 2	Tuesday	15	August	2023
	Pupils Resume	Wednesday	16	August	2023
	Autumn Holiday (schools closed)	Friday	15	September	2023
	Autumn Holiday (schools closed)	Monday	18	September	2023
	All Return	Tuesday	19	September	2023
	All Break	Friday	13	October	2023
	Staff In-service Day 3	Monday	23	October	2023
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	24	October	2023
	Term Ends	Friday	22	December	2023
	<i>Term 1 = 85 pupil days Term 1 = 88 staff days</i>				
<b>TERM 2</b>	All Resume	Monday	8	January	2024
	All Break	Friday	9	February	2024
	Staff In-service Day 4	Monday	19	February	2024
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	20	February	2023
	All Break	Thursday	28	March	2024
	Good Friday – 29 March 2024 Easter Monday – 1 April 2024  <i>Term 2 = 53 pupil days Term 2 = 54 staff days</i>				
<b>TERM 3</b>	All Resume (Staff and Pupils)	Tuesday	16	April	2024
	May Day (Schools closed)	Monday	6	May	2024
	All Resume	Tuesday	7	May	2024
	Staff In-Service Day 5 (pupil holiday)	Monday	20	May	2024
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	21	May	2024
	Term Ends  <i>Terms 3 = 52 pupil days Terms 3 = 53 staff days</i>	Friday	28	June	2024

**EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL  
RESOURCES AND PEOPLE SERVICES  
SCHOOL SESSION DATES 2024-2025 - DRAFT**

<b>TERM 1</b>	Staff In-service Day 1	Monday	12	August	2024
	Staff In-service Day 2	Tuesday	13	August	2024
	Pupils Resume	Wednesday	14	August	2024
	Autumn Holiday (schools closed)	Friday	13	September	2024
	Autumn Holiday (schools closed)	Monday	16	September	2024
	All Return	Tuesday	17	September	2024
	All Break	Friday	11	October	2024
	Staff In-service Day 3	Monday	21	October	2024
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	22	October	2024
	Term Ends	Friday	20	December	2024
	<i>Term 1 = 85 pupil days Term 1 = 88 staff days</i>				
<b>TERM 2</b>	All Resume	Monday	6	January	2025
	All Break	Friday	7	February	2025
	Staff In-service Day 4	Monday	17	February	2025
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	18	February	2025
	All Break	Friday	4	April	2025
	Good Friday – 18 April 2025 Easter Monday – 21 April 2025  <i>Term 2 = 59 pupil days Term 2 = 60 staff days</i>				
<b>TERM 3</b>	All Resume (Staff and Pupils)	Tuesday	22	April	2025
	May Day (Schools closed)	Monday	5	May	2025
	All Resume	Tuesday	6	May	2025
	Staff In-Service Day 5 (pupil holiday)	Monday	19	May	2025
	Pupils Resume	Tuesday	20	May	2025
	Term Ends  <i>Terms 3 = 46 pupil days Terms 3 = 47 staff days</i>	Thursday	26	June	2025