

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 13 SEPTEMBER 2005**

#### **EXCLUSIONS 2004/2005**

##### **Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services**

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1** To advise Members of the levels of school exclusion during session 2004/2005 and the action being undertaken to manage exclusions.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Every year the Scottish Executive collects information related to exclusion from schools and publishes this data. Along with a small number of other statistics, the level of exclusions is seen as an important measure of service provision within schools. Changes in the law mean that all children, including those who are formally excluded from school, are entitled to an education. It is therefore important to limit the number of exclusions, and this has always been an important area of policy for East Ayrshire Council.
- 2.2** There continues to be media interest in school exclusions and related high profile cases, both in Scotland and within the UK. In public announcements, both UK Ministers and Scottish Ministers state that they will support headteachers in the proper use of the exclusion sanction. Such statements do not mark a significant policy change at either national or local authority levels.
- 2.3** The Education Committee of 22 March 2005 discussed the issue of exclusions and noted the action being undertaken at that time. This paper provides an update on the position.

### **3. EXCLUSION STATISTICS**

- 3.1** The exclusion statistics for East Ayrshire Council for 2004-2005 have been forwarded, as required, to the Scottish Executive. The statistics are also broken down by sector for gender, whether temporary or permanent, duration, number per pupil, reason for exclusion and ethnic background.

3.2 The summary of the data for 2004-05 (and compared to 2003-04) is as follows:

	Incidents		Openings Lost	
	2004-05	2003-04	2004-05	2003-04
Exclusions from Primary Schools	215	205	1224	1269
Exclusions from Special Schools	12	11	138	76
Exclusions from Secondary Schools	1116	1285	6212	7891
<b>Total</b>	<b>1343</b>	<b>1501</b>	<b>7574</b>	<b>9236</b>

In 2004-05, the number of exclusion incidents was 10.5% less than in 2003-04; the number of openings lost was 18% less.

3.3 The key features of the statistics sent to the Scottish Executive are:

- There was a total of 1343 exclusions, all of which were temporary
- 16% of exclusions were from primary school, 0.9% from special schools and 83.1% from secondary schools
- 25% of the exclusions were attributable to girls and 75% were attributable to boys.
- Only 3.3% exclusions exceeded one school week in duration.
- 3.5% of pupils were excluded out of a population of approximately 18,300. Of these, 45.8% were excluded more than once.
- 2.3% were accounted for by children from ethnic minorities including those of unknown or indeterminate ethnic background. In terms of known ethnicity 0.7% were from identifiable ethnic minority populations.
- 0% exclusions were the result of racist incidents and 0.15% from racially motivated incidents.

The most common reasons given for exclusion were:

Reason For Exclusion	%
Physical abuse of fellow pupils	6.0
Physical abuse of members of staff	3.6
Verbal abuse of members of staff	23.2
Aggressive or threatening behaviour	4.2
General or persistent disobedience	23.7
Insolent or offensive behaviour	6.3

3.4 The majority of the increase in exclusions in 2003-04 had occurred in the secondary sector. An action plan was put in place to deal with this matter. The

following analysis for secondary schools of exclusion incidents per 100 pupils and the openings lost per 100 pupils for the last 6 years are as follows:

<b>SECONDARY SCHOOLS STATISTICS</b>						
	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2004-2005</b>
Exclusion Incidents per 100 pupils	12.7	13.6	10.1	11.4	15.7	13.5
Openings lost per 100 pupils	94.3	98.9	64.6	66.7	96.3	75.2

The above indicates that the number of openings lost has been significantly reduced by 22% compared to 2003-04, which indicates that pupils are not being excluded for lengthy periods of time but only as a matter of necessity. There is also a 14% reduction on the exclusion rate.

#### **4. ANALYSIS**

- 4.1** These figures indicate that exclusion is a sanction that applies to only 3.5% of pupils and that it continues to be used sparingly by head teachers. They also show that contrary to some sensational media coverage, the vast majority of pupils are well behaved and that schools are running in an atmosphere of positive discipline. This view is supported by the statistics on attainment which have been the subject of various reports to the Committee.
- 4.2** Generally, the reasons for exclusion continue to be of concern, since the categories highlighted above in paragraph 3.3 reflect some form of aggression, insolence or inability of the children concerned to work in harmony with others. The creation in young people of tolerant attitudes based on self-respect and co-operation is a central aim of education as the result of a responsible dialogue between adults and young people. Initiatives such as Circle Time, Framework for Intervention (FFI) Restorative Practice, Youth Strategy and similar approaches are likely to assist in limiting these causes of exclusion; support and advice is also provided to staff from Quality Improvement Officers, Educational Psychologists, Network Support and other colleagues within the Learning Partnerships.
- 4.3** The data indicates that boys are approximately three times as likely as girls to be excluded. This data is consistent over a number of years and is well known nationally and internationally.
- 4.4** The extremely low levels of exclusion of children from ethnic minority backgrounds would indicate that while there can never be complacency on this aspect of the data, there is no obvious need for any additional action programme. Similarly, the low level of racist incidents apparent in the exclusion figures is reassuring, and shows that there are benefits in anti-racist education. These programmes should continue.

## **5. ACTION UNDERTAKEN**

- 5.1** It had been previously identified that the majority of the increase in exclusions in 2003-04 had occurred within the secondary sector. All secondary schools were then asked to report on the reasons for the rise in exclusions. Following these reports, each secondary school submitted an action plan to deal with issues related to exclusion. These plans were monitored by the Pathways to Inclusion group and suggestions for action provided to each school.
- 5.2** Monitoring of exclusions from each school took place on a monthly basis in 2004-05. This will continue during this session.
- 5.3** Each secondary school has been asked to update their action plan for 2005-06. These plans will be considered by the Pathways to Inclusion group and monitored throughout the session.
- 5.4** A seminar for school staff on improving behaviour will take place in November 2005.

## **6. FINANCIAL/POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1** Nil

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1** It is recommended that Members:
- (i) Continue to support initiatives that promote the promotion of positive discipline in schools
  - (ii) Ask the Director of Educational and Social Services to provide further information at the end of the school session.
  - (iii) Otherwise note the contents of this report

John Mulgrew  
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

JMcC/EO'N  
22 August 2005

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Education Committee Paper – Exclusions 2003-04 – March 2005

Members requiring further information should contact John McCarney, Head of Service: Schools Support (01563) 576126

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