

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 6 FEBRUARY 2001

SUPPORTING BEHAVIOUR INITIATIVES IN SCHOOLS

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval for developments within the Department's strategy for supporting schools with behaviour management.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that Committee has received reports on the progress being made in the Department's Youth Care Strategy and the general approach to Alternatives to Exclusion. The latter programme has always been a feature of provision within East Ayrshire, but has gained pace under the Excellence Fund for Schools which came as part of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.
- 2.2 The Authority's approach to managing exclusions has been successful. However, a new impetus has been brought to this issue by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, Section 40. Detailed guidance on this matter is still awaited from the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). However, the implication of this section is clear – that children who are excluded from school, even for a short period, will be entitled to a standard of education that is equivalent to their peers. This gives a new importance to the matter of how the Authority supports schools on matters of children with challenging behaviour.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The overall position on exclusions is reported elsewhere to Committee, together with the intention to review the position. However, as a result of consultations that have taken place with head teachers two significant issues have emerged.
- 3.2 Presently there are two staff employed in the Outdoor Education Service. Over the past few years the demands for work from this team have increased significantly. This has arisen partly from routine contacts with schools and contributions to the overall work programme of the department. More particularly, however, it has arisen from the introduction of new programmes such as the New Community Schools, Action Plan and Alternatives to Exclusion. Through its involvement in the Youth Care Strategy and New Community Schools, the Outdoor Education service has developed significant expertise and experience in meeting the needs of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Their services are now in increased demand from schools,

particularly in the context of Alternatives to Exclusion. Their input offers young people the opportunity to take responsibility to manage their own behaviour, to face challenges and succeed, and thereby to raise their self-esteem. These experiences are linked to the overall provision of the school and are planned in association with senior and guidance staff. In order to meet the demand from schools, there is a need to increase the staffing of Outdoor Education Service which presently is composed of a Principal Officer and an Instructor. Under this arrangement, an additional instructor would be appointed, and together this team would fulfil the following main tasks:

- provision of general advice to schools and other services on outdoor activities
- all activities related to the Authority's license in outdoor activities
- first-aid training for the Council
- direct provision for Youth Care Strategy groups
- provision to schools-based alternatives to exclusion programmes

It is emphasised that wherever Outdoor Education is used, it only has a meaning if there are meaningful and strong links with the classroom curriculum. The purpose of this type of learning experience is therefore to give a context and relevance to general learning. It is not a replacement for conventional teaching, nor should it be regarded as an extra-curricular benefit to the young person.

3.3 The second area of support is within the Youth Care Strategy itself. The Authority's approach requires the assessment of individual children within a multi-disciplinary setting known as School Assessment Teams (SATs) and Community Assessment Teams (CATs). Central to the success of these arrangements are the contributions made by Psychological Services, alongside other colleagues. It has also been essential to have a direct psychologist input into the management of the Youth Care Strategy. The co-ordination of Psychological Services input into SATs and CATs together with a role in managing the important Youth Strategy Service is a substantial additional management burden that is more in keeping with the role of a senior psychologist than a main grade appointment. It is therefore proposed to increase the staffing level of Psychological Services from 3 to 4 Senior Psychologists as permanent appointments.

4. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Nil

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The appointment of an outdoor education instructor grade AP5 (£21036 - £22959) initially for one year as a temporary post would cost:

Salary Outdoor Instructor (1.0 FTE)@	£21998
Employment Costs	£3278
Total	£25276

This will be met from the Excellence Fund for Schools, Alternatives to Exclusion programme.

5.2 The cost of upgrading of a main grade psychologist post to the level of senior psychologist will be:

Senior Psychologist 1.0 FTE @	£36165
Psychologist 1.0 FTE @	£34191
Difference	£1974
Employment Costs	<u>£294</u>
TOTAL	£2268

This additional cost will be met by a transfer from the Youth Care Strategy budget to Psychological Services.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that Members of the Education Committee:

- (i) agree to the appointment of an additional outdoor education instructor to the outdoor learning service, initially on a temporary basis;
- (ii) refer the proposal to appoint an Outdoor Education Instructor to the Personnel and Property Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee;
- (iii) agree to the conversion of a main grade psychologist post to senior psychologist; and
- (iv) otherwise note the contents of this report

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

GRS/DL
21 January 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Social Strategy: Exclusion from School – Provision of National Advice, Education Committee, 28 April 1998
2. Alternatives to Exclusion, Result of a Recent Bid for Scottish Office Funding, Education Committee, 28 August 1997

Members requiring further information should contact Graham Short, Head of Schools (01563-576089).

Implementation Officer: Graham Short

AGENDA