

working together to improve school discipline

Discipline Stakeholder Group Joint Action Plan, October 2006



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The Discipline Stakeholder Group (DSG), comprising the Scottish Executive, teaching unions (EIS, SSTA, HAS, AHDS, NASUWT, and PAT), the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, General Teaching Council for Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, and advised by HMIE, announced an action plan to consolidate and build upon the commitments to “Better Behaviour Better Learning” and to promoting positive behaviour and tackling indiscipline. This was in response to the recent national discipline survey “Behaviour in Scottish Schools” published in October 2006.

Building on the partnership work to implement “Better Behaviour – Better Learning”, the Scottish Executive has established a Positive Behaviour Team to develop and support the implementation of approaches to promoting positive behaviour through pilots, research, disseminating information, providing training and training resources, and supporting ongoing implementation. The Positive Behaviour Team will support all the partners involved in the implementation of this action plan.



Joint Action Plan

1. The Positive Behaviour Team, funded by the Scottish Executive, will work with teachers, schools and councils to develop and sustain proven approaches to positive behaviour.
2. Every council and headteacher will be expected to use an appropriate mix of new approaches known to improve behaviour such as:
 - Behaviour co-ordinators
 - Staged Intervention/Framework for Intervention
 - Restorative practices
 - The Motivated School
 - Solution Oriented School
 - Cool in School
3. The Executive will do more to support quality improvement in on-site and off-site behaviour units by:
 - creating a network for staff who deliver this provision to meet and share good practice and improve understanding of what works best
 - publishing a good practice guide in relation to on-site and off-site provision for children showing behaviour difficulties.
4. The Executive will work with teaching unions, schools and councils to publish new practice guidance on better behaviour in corridors, playgrounds and around the school.
5. Councils will gear up their actions to ensure the strong local co-ordination and leadership that is required for effective and consistent implementation of Better Behaviour – Better Learning in their schools is provided. This means working with the Positive Behaviour Team to support their schools and provide extra training to ensure staff are confident in promoting positive behaviour.
6. Headteachers will be expected to show engagement with all staff on discipline issues. We know where this happens we get results. Headteachers must involve all members of the school community, including staff, parents and pupils, in developing and sustaining behaviour policies and a range of approaches to promoting positive behaviour in school. Councils will quality assure this and HMIE will continue to monitor the effectiveness of leadership as part of their inspections.

7. Additional support staff in schools need to be more fully valued as members of the whole school community, better integrated into school life and decision-making, and included in in-service training on behaviour issues. The Positive Behaviour Team will develop a training package tailored to the needs of these staff which the Executive will fund.
8. The Executive will step up its actions to explore the behaviour of very young children and ways to support them entering mainstream education, including 'Nurture Group' demonstration projects, pre-school services for vulnerable 2 year olds and new research on behaviour in the early years.
9. HMIE will continue to monitor responses of schools and councils to "Better Behaviour – Better Learning", paying particular attention to evaluating the extent to which policies and strategies already developed and identified feed through into real impact on the experience of teachers and pupils in schools and classrooms.


Discipline Survey 2006 – "Behaviour in Scottish Schools"

The DSG were involved in the development of the most recent survey "Behaviour in Scottish Schools" which was carried out by NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research). This is the most comprehensive survey to date, covering a wider range of questions about behaviour and including the perspectives of councils, headteachers, teachers, additional support staff, and pupils. This follows similar surveys in 1990, 1996 and 2004.

Key Findings

Key findings of the discipline survey, endorsed by all members of the Discipline Stakeholder Group include:

1. On the whole, headteachers - and the majority of teachers, additional support staff and pupils - consider pupils to be well-behaved in the classroom and around the school.
2. The key behaviour issue for schools continues to be the 'drip-drip' effect of low-level indiscipline such as talking out of turn, making unnecessary noise and hindering other pupils.
3. Most schools cope well with this most of the time and the vast majority of teachers report confidence in dealing with indiscipline.
4. Bad behaviour has not increased since the 2004 survey, but we are yet to see significant improvement overall. There is however some improvement in primary schools.

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5. There are occasional, more serious, aggressive incidents and these are more likely to occur in corridors and playgrounds than the classroom.
 6. Violence against teachers is rare. However, there is an indication that increasing numbers of very young children are entering the education system with behavioural problems.
 7. There are differences of perception on the discipline issue between headteachers, teachers, additional support staff and pupils. Headteachers are more positive than teachers and additional support staff, while pupils have the most negative perception and tougher attitudes on discipline.
 8. Additional support staff feel less included in school policies, development and training and all staff feel more positive about discipline where they are confident and supported.
 9. Where current best practice is deployed, it works. This includes:
 - Behaviour co-ordinators
 - Staged Intervention/Framework for Intervention
 - Restorative practices
 - The Motivated School
 - Solution Oriented School
 - Cool in School
 10. Where there is good communication between headteachers, teachers and support staff - and all such staff are involved in discipline improvements in the school - all staff are more confident and effective.
 11. A lot of good practice can be attributed to the implementation of the “Better Behaviour – Better Learning” agenda. Where good practice is in place, things are better and strong leadership is key to this.
 12. There is not sufficient consistency in the application of the “Better Behaviour – Better Learning” agenda between schools.

For further information

Behaviour in Scottish Schools, NFER, 2006 is available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/149957/0039922.pdf>

Behaviour in Scottish Schools, Insight summary, NFER, 2006 is available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/149771/0039878.pdf>

Better Behaviour – Better Learning Report of the Discipline Task Group, 2001 is available at:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/rdtg.pdf>

Further information on the initiatives used to promote positive behaviour in Scottish schools is available at: <http://www.betterbehaviourscotland.gov.uk/>

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This document is also available on the Scottish Executive website:
www.scotland.gov.uk

RR Donnelley B50521 03/07

ISBN 978-0-7559-5360-8



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