

## **Joint Education and Learning and Social Services (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee**

### **Action:**

**Briefing note to be provided on schools undertaking the Right Respecting Schools award and wider programmes in relation to wellbeing and counselling work being undertaken.**

### **Officer Response:**

**The Rights Respecting Schools Award puts children's rights at the heart of schools in the UK.**

The UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) works with schools to create safe and inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. The Rights Respecting Schools Award embeds these values in daily school life and gives children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens.

The Award recognises a school's achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into practice within the school and beyond. The RRSA programme unifies a range of educational priorities in all UK jurisdictions; the global dimension, social and emotional aspects of learning, hence supports schools to embed children's human rights in their ethos and culture. It recognises achievement in putting the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) at the heart of a school's practice to improve wellbeing and help all children and young people realise their potential.

The Award is based on principles of equity, dignity, non-discrimination and participation. Schools involved in the Award have reported a positive impact on relationships and wellbeing, leading to better learning and behaviour, improved academic standards and less bullying, community cohesion and sustainable development.

**There are four key areas of impact for children at a Rights Respecting school; wellbeing, participation, relationships and self-esteem.**

The difference that a Rights Respecting School makes goes beyond the school gates, making a positive impact on the whole community.

- Children are healthier and happier
- Children feel safe
- Children have better relationships
- Children become active and involved in school life and the wider world

Schools within Blaenau Gwent endeavour to align wellbeing priorities for the pupils, staff and community of their school to the articles (as mentioned below) to ensure the Rights Respecting principles are understood and implemented.

To date 5 (25%) schools have achieved the bronze and silver award, 2 (8%) schools are working towards it whilst a number have expressed an interest to work towards this post Covid. It is important to state that all schools interlink RRS and Values Based Education principles **regardless** of whether working towards the award or not. This helps develop using Rights and Values as a core theme where Rights and Rights Language is used throughout the curriculum.

For reference in 1989, governments across the world promised all children the same rights by adopting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention says what countries must do so that all children grow as healthy as possible, can learn at school, are protected, have their views listened to, and are treated fairly. The Articles are as follows:

#### **Article 1**

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

#### **Article 2**

The Convention applies to everyone: whatever their race, religion or abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

#### **Article 3**

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

#### **Article 4**

Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights.

#### **Article 5**

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to direct and guide their children as they grow up, so that they can enjoy their rights properly.

#### **Article 6**

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to make sure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

#### **Article 7**

Every child has the right to a legal name and nationality, as well as the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

#### **Article 8**

Governments must respect every child's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

#### **Article 9**

Children must not be separated from their parents unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

#### **Article 10**

Governments must act quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents want to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit both of them.

#### **Article 11**

Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally or being prevented from returning.

**Article 12**

Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

**Article 13**

Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

**Article 14**

Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of parents to give their children information about this right.

**Article 15**

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

**Article 16**

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life.

**Article 17**

Every child has the right to reliable information from the media. This should be information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

**Article 18**

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by giving them the help they need, especially if the child's parents work.

**Article 19**

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

**Article 20**

If a child cannot be looked after by their family, governments must make sure that they are looked after properly by people who respect the child's religion, culture and language.

**Article 21**

If a child is adopted, the first concern must be what is best for the child. All children must be protected and kept safe, whether they are adopted in the country where they were born or in another country.

**Article 22**

If a child is a refugee or is seeking refuge, governments must make sure that they have the same rights as any other child. Governments must help in trying to reunite child refugees with their parents.

**Article 23**

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide support to disabled children.

**Article 24**

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must work to provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 25**

If a child lives away from home (in care, hospital or in prison, for example) they have the right to a regular check of their treatment and the way they are cared for.

**Article 26**

Governments must provide extra money for the children of families in need.

**Article 27**

Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical, social and mental needs. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

**Article 28**

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

**Article 29**

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

**Article 30**

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, regardless of whether these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

**Article 31**

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

**Article 32**

Governments must protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or education.

**Article 33**

Governments must protect children from the use of illegal drugs.

**Article 34**

Governments must protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

**Article 35**

Governments must ensure that children are not abducted or sold.

**Article 36**

Governments must protect children from all other forms of bad treatment.

**Article 37**

No child shall be tortured or suffer other cruel treatment or punishment. A child should be arrested or put in prison only as a last resort and then for the shortest possible time. Children must not be in a prison with adults. Children who are locked up must be able to keep in contact with their family.

**Article 38**

Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war. Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces.

**Article 39**

Children neglected, abused, exploited, tortured or who are victims of war must receive special help to help them recover their health, dignity and self-respect.

**Article 40**

A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to help from a lawyer and a fair trial that takes account of their age or situation. The child's privacy must be respected at all times.

**Article 41**

If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws must stay in place.

**Article 42**

Governments should make the Convention known to children and adults. The Convention has 54 articles in total. Articles 43–54 are about how adults and governments work together to make sure that all children get all their rights.

**Action:**

**Briefing note to be provided on the timeliness of schools receiving the information in relation to pupil school to school transfers within Blaenau Gwent and pupils moving into the borough.**

**Officer Response:**

**In-Year Transfers (admission that is requested outside of the normal admission round)**

In-year transfer or admission refers to applications made in-year (during and not prior to the academic year commencing), and/or outside of the normal admission round. For example, pupils moving into the borough, wishing to change schools and so forth. All In-year transfers are dealt with in date order of receipt. Where there are a greater number of applications received than the number of places available, the Council will apply their oversubscription criteria (as per the School Admissions Policy for Nursery and Statutory Education) in order to determine place allocation and/or refusal.

Applications are processed within 7-15 working days of receipt, confirmation of a place is proved by the Council, and confirmation of a start date is provided by the school. Where possible the start date provided by the school is within 10 days of place allocation being confirmed.

In the following circumstances pupil allocation will be managed differently to that of a standard transfer request:

- **Complex Admissions** – an admission is considered to be complex, if the needs of the pupil fall outside of the standard admission and hard to place procedures (detailed below). In this case a working group co-ordinated by the Admissions Officer, will be convened in order to address the complex nature of the placement, ensuring that all of the pupils needs can be addressed within an appropriate education setting.
- **Hard to place pupils**– applicants who are considered hard to place, fall into one or more of the categories presented below. The 14 categories cover circumstances and/or needs which would deem or contribute to a learner being considered as hard to place:
  - Children who were permanently excluded from their last maintained school placement and are able / ready to integrate to an alternative school;
  - Children returning from the criminal justice system (secure estate);
  - Child victims of serious crimes (child cruelty, kidnapping, sexual or violent crime, FGM);
  - Children who are CLA;
  - Children who have been out of education for longer than two months;
  - Children with below 50% attendance;

- Children with disabilities or medical conditions which have already impacted on their attendance or participation at school;
- Children of carers, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, children whose parents offend, asylum seekers and refugees who have been in the UK less than two years and need a supported entry to school;
- Homeless children who have been placed in temporary housing;
- Children who are in a refuge due to domestic violence;
- Children of UK service personnel where a change of location ordered by the service leads to a need for a change of school and will have experienced multiple moves;
- Children who have received 10 day exclusions in the last twelve months; and/or,
- Children on the child protection register.

It may not be possible to process complex and hard to place admissions within the target timeframe outlined above. In such cases, the applicant would be informed of any increase to the processing timescales with regards to their application, and the process through which the application will be managed. The Additional Learning Needs Panel and/ or the Complex Admissions Working Group, would be responsible for managing applications as outlined above.

As part of the transfer allocation process, the Council contacts the child and/or young person's current school to obtain information in order to support their application, and to ensure a smooth transition to the recipient school (please refer to **Appendix 1**). This information is then shared with the recipient school in order to make sure that they are equipped to meet the pupils' educational, learning and any other identified needs upon transfer.

If the child and/or young person is in the care of the Local Authority, or in receipt of Social Services support, the Social Worker completes the application form and liaises with the admissions authority and school in order to inform the admissions process.

The admissions authority does not encourage transfers from one local school to another, due to the potential disruption that it causes to all parties. However, it does recognise that this process may be required in putting the needs of the child and/or young person first.

Appendix 1 – In-year Transfer Information Sheet



**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

**In-Year School Admission or  
Transfer Information Sheet**

1. Name: [Redacted]
2. DOB: [Redacted]
3. Gender: [Redacted]
4. Current School: [Redacted]
5. Reason for leaving: [Redacted]
6. School Requested (via transfer): [Redacted]
7. LAC/Previously LAC: [Redacted]
8. Attendance for current school year: [Redacted]
9. Exclusion Information (if applicable):  
[Redacted]
10. Details of any ALN current/ previous:  
[Redacted]
11. Statement Specific Details:  
[Redacted]
12. Details of any social services involvement:  
[Redacted]



## 13. Child Protection Information (if applicable)

## 14. Free School Meal entitlement:

## 15. Current Levels of Performance for the pupil/student;

Date of assessment	FPOI (Year 2)	The last National Literacy Standard aged score and reading age (Years 2-9)	The last National Numeracy Standard aged score (Years 2-9)	KS2 CSI (Year 6)	KS3 CSI (Year 9)	GCSE information
Other qualifications						
Intervention Programmes?						

- Youth Worker and/ or External Agency Involvement via School:
  
- Parental Engagement (details, dates and comments):
  
- Behaviour / General Comments

Compiled by:

Signed:

Date:

## **Briefing Note**

### **Action:**

**How information is provided to schools, when there have been incidents, over the weekend in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).**

### **Officer Response:**

#### **1. Approach to ASB management**

Within BG there is a close working relationship in place between partners and an established Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) multi agency group with representation from the Education Directorate that provides management and oversight to those individuals whose behaviour is escalating.

#### **2. Four Strike Anti-Social Behaviour Process**

The four strike process is used to tackle anti-social behaviour by identified individuals. The process aims to prevent the escalation of anti-social behaviour by putting in intervention and support methods at various stages. The process consists of four separate stages but is designed to be flexible to allow for each case to be professionally judged on the frequency and severity of the anti-social behaviour.

##### **Strike 1**

A referral is received regarding an individual's conduct in the community. A Strike 1 warning letter is issued to 1) the parent/carer of the young person, 2) the adult perpetrator.

The letter sets out the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and the future consequences for the individual if the behaviour was to continue.

The warning letters are primarily issued by the Police. The information is shared with Community Safety and is stored on an electronic case management database.

##### **Strike 2**

When a second referral is received for continued anti-social behaviour within six months of the Strike 1 letter, a Strike 2 letter will be sent.

The warning letters are primarily issued by the Police. The information is shared with Community Safety and is stored on an electronic case management database.

### Strike 3

When a third referral is received for continued anti-social behaviour within six months of the Strike 2 letter, a Strike 3 meeting is held under Section 115. The meetings are usually held on a monthly basis.

The Strike 3 meetings are multi agency and the core group usually comprises: Community Safety, Police, Youth Offending Service, Registered Social Landlords, Senior Education Welfare Officer, Youth Service, Children's Social Services and Families First.

The Community Safety team sends out an agenda to agencies prior to the meeting to ensure that they attend with up to date information. The group will consider a range of tools and powers that can be used to address the anti-social behaviour and prevent further escalation, including:

- Early Intervention Clinics – A meeting can be scheduled to take place in a formal setting (normally police station) to discuss the behaviour with 1) the young person and their parent/carer or 2) the adult perpetrator. Following this meeting, and with consent, referrals can then be made for the young person/family to support services and/or intervention services, or to adult support services.
- Joint visits – A home visit can be arranged to discuss the behaviour with 1) the young person and their parent/carer or 2) the adult perpetrator. Following this meeting, and with consent, referrals can then be made for the young person/family to support services and/or intervention service, or to adult support services.
  - Referral to Youth Offending Service projects, such as REACH, Engage and Change Happens (part of the Prevention Team)
  - Age range 8 -17 years old.
  - Access to a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service worker; Substance Misuse worker; Speech, Language Therapist; Education, Training and Employment worker; Youth worker, etc.
  - Must obtain consent from the child and family as it is a voluntary intervention.
  - Can provide intervention and support for up to 6 months.
  - Cover work around anger management; anti-social behaviour; shoplifting; victim empathy; peer pressure; restorative work, etc.
- Referral to Gwent Police NxtGen Project
  - Primary role is youth engagement to produce ethically informed citizens and offer inclusive and diversionary activities. These include Cadets, Junior Cadets and Heddlu Bach, etc.
  - Will work with young people who have been identified in general nuisance in the community, before they are in the system.
  - Offer accredited qualifications.
  - Will find out what the young people are interested in and offer relevant activities.
- Referral to Youth Service Projects

- Detached Youth Workers engage with young people in 'hotspot' anti-social behaviour areas identified.
  - Positive Futures work with young people aged 11+ who have been identified as being at risk of anti-social behaviour and offending behaviour in the community.
  - Provide 'one off' workshops to various activities and specialist support if required.
- Referral to Phoenix Domestic Abuse Service
    - Youth Respect Programme - Child/Adolescent to parent violence and abuse
    - Health Relationships Programme
- Referral to the Fire Intervention Service.
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract (voluntary 6-months contract)
    - A letter to attend a meeting to discuss and sign the contract is sent to the young person's parent/carer or adult perpetrator.
    - The Community Safety Team, Police, Youth Offending Service and Registered Social Landlord can be present at the meeting. When the contract is signed by a young person, YOS will attend and offer support.
    - The contract consists of a number of conditions based on the schedule of incidents.
    - The perpetrator is advised that if they do not sign the contract and continue to act in an anti-social manner, that further more punitive action will be considered.
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract Breaches
    - The breach process can be flexible and based on professional judgement of individual cases. Home visits, and further Early Intervention Clinics can be held to discuss the breaches with the young person prior to any enforcement action being taken. When the decision has been made to escalate the breach, a referral is made to Strike 4.

## **Strike Four**

The Strike four meeting is held under Section 115 to discuss the enforcement tools available to stop the anti-social behaviour on a case-by-case basis.

The core group comprises the Community Safety Team, Police, Youth Offending Service/Probation, Registered Social Landlord, Children's Social Services, Families First, Senior Education Welfare Officer, Youth Service and Adult Social Services. Legal Services can either be invited to the meeting or a file of evidence is sent to Legal Services for advice.

### **3.0 The Role of the Education Welfare Officer in disseminating the information to schools**

When the agenda is received, the Senior Education Welfare Officer contacts both the school and the EWO for relevant information to take to panel. That information is used as part of the discussion to see what intervention, if any, should be offered to the young person. If there are any actions for school, that information is shared as soon as

possible, but if there are no actions the minutes are shared with schools when available.

Due to confidentiality only the relevant sections of the minutes are shared with schools.

#### **4.0 Education ASB process**

Following analysis of the ASB cases during 2017/18 there was a notable link between exclusions and the children involved in ASB community. As a result, Education developed a 4 Strike Anti-Social Behaviour Process in schools

##### **Strike 1**

1st stage of ASB in school - school based action - refer to school behaviour policy, PSP guidance, PASS results, restorative practice, school counsellor. At this stage a 1st letter should be issued to parents

##### **Strike 2**

2nd stage of ASB in school - in addition to school actions below consider involving external agencies such as School Liaison Officer, Inspire, Families First, REACH, Young Carers, Changing Minds, Primary Mental Health, EPS, Positive Futures. At this stage a 2nd letter should be issued to parents. A parenting contract is also considered at this stage.

##### **Strike 3**

3rd stage of ASB in school - checks to be made with Community Safety - this could result in a referral to ASB case management group. A letter sent to parents informing them of a potential multi-agency approach taking place. A parenting order is also considered at this stage.

##### **Strike 4**

4th stage of ASB in schools - punitive i.e. managed move, breach of Parenting Order

**Action:**

**In relation to EHE pupils – information to be provided on how those pupils were assessed for their Summer results (teacher assessments).**

**Officer Response:**

The legislation regarding Elective Home Education (EHE) in Wales is as follows:

Full-time education is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16, but school is not: under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, a child may be educated either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Parents who choose to educate their child at home are responsible for ensuring that the education provided is efficient, full-time and suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. They are not required to register or seek approval to educate their child at home. Nor are they required to follow the National Curriculum for Wales, provide a broad and balanced education, have a timetable or to formally assess progress.

Although LAs do not have a duty to monitor the quality of home education on a routine basis, local authorities have a duty, under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, to intervene if it appears that a child is not receiving a suitable education. Local authorities also have a duty, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Education Directorate has offered EHE baseline assessments to all KS2, KS3 and year 10 pupils (year 11 were not offered as they would not be in school for retesting) and only 5 parents/carers took up the offer. The outcome data is shown overleaf for information.

Age	Reading			Spelling			Comprehension		Maths	
	Raw Score out of 70	Standard Score	Age Equivalent	Raw Score out of 57	Standard Score	Age Equivalent	Raw Score out of 50	Standard Score	Raw Score out of 55	Standard Score
14.06	55	110	16-16.11	37	98	14-14.5	38	90 *	33	88
13.10	67	145	18+	47	135	18+	46	117	44	116
10.06	60	145	18+	39	121	15-15.11	44	137	33	106
13.10	42	91	9.8-9.11	28	84	10-10.3	26	85	27	77
13.10	64	145	18+	42	111	18+	46	117	40	106

\* left a page out , so would probably have scored higher

**Key:**

Standardised Scores	-70	70 to 84	85-89	90-110	111 - 119	120 to 130	130
Standardised Deviations	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Range	well below	below average	low average	Average	High Average	above average	well above

**Action:**

**Information to be provided to show that pupils who are eligible for free school meals are taking up their entitlement.**

**Officer Response:****Free School Meals Direct Payment Implementation Overview**

The Education Transformation team assumed responsibility for providing all free school meal eligible pupils, with a direct payment of £19.50 per week throughout school closure periods as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first round of applications opened in April 2020 and approx. 1,200 applications were made, of these, 1,055 pupils were identified as eligible and began receiving the payments. The application round was initiated on a weekly basis throughout the closure periods, with application in the hundreds coming through on a weekly basis. By July 2020 there were 2,206 pupils claiming direct payments.

The schools re-opened in September 2020, however, payments continued for pupils who received a positive COVID-19 test result, along with those required to self-isolate and/or those affected by class closures. The lead officer liaised with schools, the Council's Benefits team and the Policy and Performance team, in order to streamline the process, and identify pupils who were eligible for a payment. Payments were also made for the October half-term and Christmas holiday period which required another round of applications to be opened.

For the October half-term 2020 2,223 payments were administered, and for the Christmas holiday period, 2,343 payments were made. Schools closed again during January 2021 so weekly application rounds continued for newly eligible pupils, new creditors were set up weekly, and by February half term 2,432 pupils were in receipt of a direct payment.

Self-isolation and Holiday payments have continued to the present day. The following timeline highlights the number of pupils receiving the payment at each payment period:

- Easter 2021 – 2,446
- June 2021 – 2,491
- Summer holiday period 2021 – 2,567
- October half-term 2021 – 2,408
- Christmas holiday period 2021 – 2,530
- February half-term 2022 – 2,584

This process has had a significant impact upon human resources within the Education Transformation team in particular. This has included, administration and management of application rounds, eligibility assessment, the set-up and administration of payments. In addition, a significant proportion of queries are received daily via telephone and email. For examples, changes to bank details, adding siblings to claims, queries in relation to payment, changes to residence and so forth.



Currently, the application round opens before each holiday period for newly eligible families. However, the team plan to increase the frequency of the application rounds, due to the level of enquires re: newly eligible pupils. A review is currently underway, which also considers the roll-out of universal free school meals, for which a project group has been established.