

ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
26 NOVEMBER 2009
ATTENDANCE DEFAULT PROCEDURES
REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

This report brings to the attention of the Education Committee proposals for improving the procedures for managing attendance default in Angus Primary and Secondary Schools.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee should:

- (i) note the contents of this report
- (ii) note the intention to undertake a review of current attendance default procedures
- (iii) note the arrangements being made to put in place immediate improvements pending arrangements for that review.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Attendance across Angus is generally very good. National figures for 2008/2009 are not yet available. However, the Angus figures have been generally static over the previous three sessions. Attendance in Angus is consistently higher than the national average, and either equal to or higher than the comparator average.

Attendance across Angus 2005 – 2008**PRIMARY**

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Angus	96	96	96
CA Average	96	96	96
National	95	95	95

SECONDARY

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Angus	92	92	93
CA Average	92	91	92
National	90	91	91

2.2 It is expected that all schools will promote a culture which encourages pupils to attend school. Central to that aim is the development of an ethos which secures early and effective partnerships with parents to address jointly any emerging attendance problems. The attendance default guidelines provide a framework to assist Head Teachers to manage non-attendance issues within the context of a legal framework.

2.3 The current version of the Angus Attendance Default Guidelines has been in place since November 2008, replacing an earlier version published in 1997.

Most schools make effective use of the guidelines. However, a small but significant group of pupils fail to attend school on a regular basis. This clearly has a negative impact on the capacity of these individual pupils to achieve their potential.

2.4 **Referrals to School and Family Support Service for Attendance (Period 1 August 2007 to 31 July 2008)**

87 referrals for attendance

72 goals met (of these 7 were also referred to another agency)

4 referred to another agency

11 goals not met

2.5 **Referrals to School and Family Support Service for Attendance (Period 1 August 2008 to 31 July 2009)**

53 referrals for attendance

47 goals met (of these 4 were also referred to another agency)

1 referred to another agency

5 goals not met (of these 2 were referred to another agency)

2.6 The Authority's ongoing evaluation and monitoring of attendance has identified the need for a further review of procedures for attendance default issues.

A working group of officers from Education, Social Work & Health and Law and Administration have explored a number of improvement priorities, in consultation with members of the Attendance Sub-Committee. These priorities will influence the focus and scope of the review proposed below.

3 PROPOSAL

3.1 It is proposed that a review of the Attendance Default Guidelines be undertaken. This review should be an integral part of our commitments to 'getting it right for every child' in Angus. The review, which should take account of recent changes to the Angus Children's Services structure, will explore pupil attendance matters in the context of:

- Curriculum for Excellence, skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work
- amendments to the Additional Support for Learning Act
- Looked After Children provision and updated guidance
- new guidance on exclusion from school
- extended support for pupils (formerly offsite) arrangements
- partnerships with Angus College and the voluntary sector

- the Early Years Framework
- the Authority's staged intervention process.

3.2 It is anticipated that key issues to be addressed in the review will include:

- criteria – including numerical triggers, as appropriate – for referring pupils to the Attendance Default Sub-Committee
- in-school attendance monitoring arrangements including daily/weekly recording procedures
- the operation of SEEMIS and related CPD needs, as appropriate
- identification of existing best practice
- specific authority arrangements to monitor the attendance of pupils who are the subject of attendance orders
- current support to pupils whose school attendance gives cause for concern
- the overall impact of the authority's Attendance Default Guidelines.

3.3 Pending the establishment of the review exercise, the following amendments to current practice will be put in place:

- **Liaison with School and Family Support Service (SFSS)** – Senior staff from schools meet SFSS colleagues on a regular basis. Liaison meetings should involve scrutinising patterns of non-attendance and helping schools to identify pupils in **early** need of support.
- **Referrals to Attendance Default Sub-Committee** – SFSS school liaison meetings should explore options for earlier referral to the Attendance Default Sub-Committee.
- **Tracking Attendance** – there needs to be a more consistent approach in schools to the application of management information systems to record and track pupil absence accurately
- **Staged Intervention** – there is a need to make more effective use of the Staged Intervention approach. The Additional Support Needs Staged Intervention Five Stage Process is outlined in the Angus Council Support for Learners Policy (2006). This needs to be consistently applied for pupils failing to attend school. Stage 3 Case Conferences are key in ensuring appropriate agencies are involved and in considering next steps within and beyond school. Pupils and parents should be actively engaged in the Stage 4 decision-making process.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from the consideration of this report.

6 SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

6.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Single Outcome Agreement:

- young people and adults in Angus maximise their potential through learning opportunities (National Outcome 3)
- achieving: children and young people in Angus will have access to positive learning environments and opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem to the fullest potential (National Outcome 4)
- included: children and young people in Angus and their carers will have access to high quality services and be assisted to overcome the social, educational, physical environmental; and economic barriers that create inequality (National Outcome 7).

7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The issues dealt with in this Report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 In accordance with the Standing Orders of the Council, this report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law & Administration.

RACHAEL SEITZ
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Note: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.