The Highland Council

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	EDU/4/24

Committee:	Education and Learning
Date:	21 February 2024
Report Title:	Promoting Positive Behaviour
Report By:	Executive Chief Officer, Education & Learning

1.	Purpose/Executive Summary
1.1	In the recent report on <u>Behaviour in Scottish Schools</u>, the consensus of headteachers, class teachers and support staff was that there has been a general deterioration in the behaviour of pupils in primary and secondary schools in Scotland since 2016. Although the majority of pupils were still said to behave well and cause teaching staff few difficulties, in 2023 all school staff groups reported that there was an increase in nearly every measure, from the low level to more serious disruptive behaviours. This pattern is reflected in data from Highland schools, where Pupil-Staff Incidents[1] and incidents of exclusion rose sharply in 2022-23 and has remained at this higher level in session 2023-24.
1.2	The peak of Pupil-Staff Incidents (previously called Violent Incidents) occurs in P3, when the academic expectations on children rise, but many haven't yet developed a level of language to express their feelings or skill in self-regulation. They therefore express their fear and distress at times through behaviour that can be challenging to manage. From P4 the number of incidents decrease.
1.4	The peak number of exclusions occur in S3, where pupils are mid-way through adolescence, testing their independence, engaging in activities without thinking through the consequences and challenging the hierarchy of a school through behaviours that are sometimes challenging for staff to manage.
1.5	In considering the approach we have taken in Highland to support pupils and staff, we have looked to national frameworks supporting education and children's services. These are consistent in their promotion of positive relationships being central to creating inclusive practices and the wellbeing and achievement of children and young people.
1.6	Research into authoritative school 'climate' indicates a balance between high expectations and structure on one hand, and warmth and support on the other. This authoritative 'climate' has been cited as reducing student dropout rates, improving

[1] This process was revised in 2023 to allow any staff member to log any level of incident and with a process change it is difficult to compare with confidence to data from previous years.

	attainment, and leading to less bullying and victimisation in schools. In supporting both attainment and behaviour in Highland schools, we have considered this research that shows that where schools have attainment that is higher than expected for their catchment area, they also demonstrate positive relationships throughout the school community, and children and young people are involved meaningfully in decisions which affect them at all levels of the school.
1.7	This report outlines some of the national thinking on promoting positive relationships and also highlights the approach taken in Highland to demonstrate that it is consistent with national and international recommended practice. It also outlines the key findings from the Behaviour in Scottish Schools Report which is in line with the experiences of staff in Highland schools. In conclusion there is also a range of activity noted which aims to continue to support improved attainment, good order, and behaviour in our schools through promoting positive relationships.
2.	**Recommendations**
2.1	Members are asked to: i. note the outcome of the national survey; ii. note the actions taken to address concerns in schools and the training and support available to school staff; and iii. endorse the approach taken in the Highland Framework and Guidance on Promoting Positive Relationships as being in line with current research and national guidance from Scottish Government and Education Scotland.
3.	**Implications**
3.1	**Resource** Current resource within the Highland Council Psychological Service is skewed heavily towards this area of work, supporting children, young people, parents, and staff and advising on strategic developments both locally and nationally.
3.2	**Legal** • Health and Wellbeing is one of the three main strands of Curriculum for Excellence and as such there is a duty on all local Authorities in Scotland to address this area of work across the curriculum in all schools. • The Education (ASL) (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2009 requires the local authority to identify, provide for and review the additional support required by children and young people with ASN who are over-represented in the statistics relating to exclusion and pupil-staff incidents. • The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 stresses the importance of everyone involved with a child taking responsibility for their wellbeing, and ensuring they work together to enable the child to reach their full potential. • The Equality Act 2010 requires all local authorities to support those staff members and school pupils who have disabilities. • The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 highlights the need for statutory bodies to take a rights-based approach to supporting children and to ensure all children have their right to an education upheld.
3.3	**Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)**

	It is acknowledged that many children from 'vulnerable' groups are over-represented in those who are excluded from school, are involved in pupil-staff incidents or are not in school full time. This includes children, families and staff living in SIMD 1+2, those with additional support needs and those who are known to have experienced previous adversity. Increasing the knowledge and skill of staff working with these groups and intervening to support at an early stage is therefore important in addressing this inequality. This service takes a trauma informed approach, as it is known that this can have positive community, poverty, and equality implications by reducing the impact of trauma on those individuals and groups more at risk of experiencing adversity and enabling individuals to be better supported. In relation to children's rights, an impact assessment was completed when the Positive Relationships Guidance was reviewed in 2018. It identified the following articles to be of particular note; • Article 12 All children have the right to express their views and have these taken into account in matters affecting them. • Article 19 – Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them. • Article 28 Every child has the right to an education.
3.4	**Climate Change / Carbon Clever** There are no identified implications except that training can be (and is being) delivered remotely at present and is likely to continue as a means of providing continued staff development, which reduces or negates the need to drive to venues in the future.
3.5	**Risk** The Promoting Positive Relationships Guidance directly supports the positive growth and development of children and young people at an early stage, reducing the risk of escalating behaviours. It also provides evidence informed guidance for school staff in supporting pupils in our schools.
3.6	**Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** Pupil-staff incidents are recorded and reported to the Education Service Health and Safety Committee on a regular basis. Where schools have particular concerns about the safety of staff or pupils, they work with the H+S team to undertake risk assessments and to ensure action is taken to reduce the known risks. There is a risk to staff from injuries where serious incidents occur in schools and also a risk to psychological safety should staff not feel supported during or after a serious incident. It is therefore important that all incidents are reported and addressed appropriately and compassionately.
3.7	**Gaelic** There are no specific implications for Gaelic learners. Support is available, where appropriate, to all pupils and staff.
4.	**Background**

4.1	Within the past 50 years, our knowledge of child development, motivation and theories of learning have matured significantly and have informed educational practices across Scotland. Our current thinking in children's services has been more widely shaped by an understanding of child psychology, child development and systems thinking, allowing the approaches we take within the classroom and in wider society to be more sophisticated and thoughtful. We now have a greater awareness of the importance of early development on the long-term outcomes for individuals.
4.2	Over many years, international research has established the key connection between a positive school ethos and attainment and achievement. This is true with respect to so-called soft skills and also for indicators such as literacy and numeracy benchmarks and exam scores. This holds for secondary school (Murray & Zvoch, 2011)[2] as well as primary. For example one study with young teenagers showed that perceived teacher emotional support explained 42% of variance in students' sense of belonging in school, 43% of self-efficacy beliefs and 32% of academic effort (Sakiz et al., 2012)[3]. In general, the benefits of positive relationships with teachers can be seen in higher attainment and fewer social and behavioural issues (Crosnoe et al., 2004[4]; Ladd & Burgess, 2001[5]; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004[6]). This confirms a common sense view that we all learn better in contexts where: • We feel safe; • There is encouragement to try, and positive feedback on efforts; • Mistakes are not ridiculed but framed as natural parts of learning; • We feel liked and valued and that someone who matters approves of our efforts; • We are treated with respect. There is not therefore a choice or dichotomy between "learning" and "behaviour" – the same aspects of school ethos and ways of teaching that encourage and foster positive behaviour are those that make such teaching effective.
4.3	There is also a greater understanding of the impact of the behaviour of adults on that of children and young people. There is also a greater acceptance of a rights-based approach and an understanding of the power differentials in any work with vulnerable groups, including children and young people.
4.4	In drawing together relevant research and educational thinking, we now know that taking a more relationship-based approach, with a focus on self-regulation and co-regulation, is more effective in creating calm and respectful early years settings,

[2] Murray, C., & Zvoch, K. (2011). Teacher—student relationships among behaviorally at-risk African American youth from low-income backgrounds: student perceptions, teacher perceptions, and socioemotional adjustment correlates. *Jour nal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, *19*(1), 41-54.

[3] Sakiz, G., Pape, S. J., & Hoy, A. W. (2012). Does perceived teacher affective support matter for middle school students in mathematics classrooms? *Journal of school Psychology*, *50*(2), 235-255.

[4] Crosnoe, R., Johnson, M. K., & Elder Jr, G. H. (2004). Intergenerational bonding in school: The behavioral and contextual correlates of student-teacher relationships. *Sociology of education*, *77*(1), 60-81.

[5] Ladd, G. W., & Burgess, K. B. (2001). Do relational risks and protective factors moderate the linkages between childhood aggression and early psychological and school adjustment? *Child Development*, *72*(5), 1579-1601.

[6] Pianta, R. C., & Stuhlman, M. W. (2004). Teacher-child relationships and children's success in the first years of school. *School psychology review*, *33*(3), 444.

	classrooms and schools, and provides a hope that this will in turn create more respectful and responsible citizens for the future.
5.	**National and Local Guidance**
5.1	The National Improvement Framework sets out clear priorities to deliver excellence and equity and outlines a number of key drivers for improvement that also support inclusive practice i.e. authoritative and distributive leadership; the engagement of pupils and their parents/carers in the education process; and the promotion of differentiated and developmentally sensitive approaches to curricular planning and delivery.
5.2	The General Teaching Council for Scotland's National Standards for Teachers expects all staff to be proactive in promoting positive relationships and behaviour in the classroom, playground and across the wider school community. It states that all practitioners have a responsibility for: • Establishing open, positive, supporting relationships across the community, where children and young people will feel that they are listened to, and where they feel secure in their ability to discuss sensitive aspects of their lives; • Promoting a climate in which children and young people feel safe and secure; • Modelling behaviour which promotes health and wellbeing; • Using learning and teaching methodologies which promote effective learning; • Being sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing of each child and young person.
5.3	Children's wellbeing is at the heart of Getting it Right for Every Child, providing a focus on the wellbeing indicators to prevent or reduce the impact of adversity. The assessment and planning for children that forms part of the *National Practice Model* promotes early intervention and preventative strategies, as well as a focus on targeted support and also includes a commitment to developing positive learning environments at a universal level, underpinned by children's rights. A culture where children and young people feel included, respected, safe and secure and where their achievements and contributions are valued and celebrated is essential to the development of good relationships.
5.4	Included, Engaged and Involved (part 2) is national guidance on preventing and managing school exclusions. The foundational principle of this guidance is that schools, learning establishments and education authorities create and promote a whole school ethos of prevention, early intervention and support against a background which promotes positive relationships, learning and behaviour. Within this context Highland Council Education Committee agreed our own Framework and Guidance on Promoting Positive Relationships, which is a detailed document providing advice, support and resources to schools to help them develop a whole school approach.
6.	**Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research 2023**
6.1	Since 2006, the Scottish Government has undertaken 5 national surveys of schools, gathering data on behaviour as perceived and experienced by school staff themselves. The most recent report on this data collection was published in 2023 and provides data on the experiences of staff in schools post-Covid.

6.2	Staff continue to find that the majority of pupils engage in positive behaviours in the classroom in all or most lessons. While headteachers' experiences generally remained more positive, particularly in primary schools, teachers and support staff experiences of pupil behaviour in primary and secondary schools were more negative across a wide range of behaviours. Across primary and secondary schools, abuse between pupils and physical destructiveness have also increased.
6.3	This qualitative research identified new and emerging patterns of disruptive behaviour including vaping and in-school truancy, a rise in misogynistic views expressed by male pupils, and problematic use of mobile phones and social media.
6.4	Most school staff perceived that pupil behaviour was worse in 2023 than before the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions began in March 2020, both in the classroom (77%) and around the school (80%). School staff involved in the research perceived COVID-19 to have had a negative impact on behaviour, particularly for those pupils whose transition - either between early years and primary or primary and secondary - was disrupted. School staff viewed these pupils as showing signs of immaturity, leading to low level disruption. The pandemic was seen to have resulted in delays to pupils' social and communication skills, leading to distressed and disruptive behaviour related to sharing, playing together and communicating their feelings in primaries, and interpersonal relationships and group work in secondaries.
6.5	Additional perceived impacts of COVID-19 included disengagement with school and schoolwork, reduction in attendance for some pupils, anxiety and poorer mental wellbeing and greater reliance on mobile phones and social media. Again, the most negative impacts were considered to be felt by the most vulnerable pupils; those affected by poverty, deprivation and trauma.
6.6	While a number of in-school factors which predict behaviour were identified in the quantitative analysis, participants in the interviews and focus groups focused on societal factors such as poverty and deprivation, and challenges associated with home and family life such as trauma, adverse childhood experiences and parenting, as the root causes of disruptive behaviour. Interview participants also identified school-based factors as supporting positive behaviour in schools, such as a whole-school approach to recognising and celebrating positive behaviour and strong relationships between teachers, pupils and their families. This highlights the challenge for schools in balancing in-school approaches to promoting positive behaviour alongside an external societal context outside their direct sphere of influence.
6.7	In primary schools, the behaviour most frequently identified as having the greatest negative impact on experience, reported by 57% of primary school staff, was pupils talking out of turn. In secondary schools, the behaviour most commonly reported as having the greatest negative impact was pupils using/looking at mobile phones or tablets when they should not. The more serious cases of dysregulated behaviour were much rarer in occurrence.
6.8	Preventative approaches were seen as effective in dealing with low-level disruption, but needed to be built into a whole school approach and applied consistently to be of best effect. School staff were generally supportive of more nurturing and restorative approaches to managing discipline, with the caveat that time and support were needed to integrate these fully within the school, and that there had to be meaningful consequences within this approach for more serious disruptive behaviour.

6.9	The systems of recording serious incidents in many local authorities were found to be overly bureaucratic and so reviews were recommended, in line with national guidance and while teachers regularly described the need for 'consequences' to serious incidents, apart from removing the pupils involved from class or school, they found it difficult to articulate any additional strategies that may be effective.
6.10	The general recommendations from this report outlined the need to ensure good levels of resourcing and specialist support for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs and also regular training and collaboration within and across schools to build confidence in staff and to share effective practice. There was also a clear recommendation for more sustained pupil and parent participation and integrated planning and support within a staged approach to meeting need.
7.	**Promoting Positive Relationships – Highland Council Framework and Guidance**
7.1	Education is a social endeavour. Children who are prosocial tend to have higher levels of attainment and achievement than less prosocial children. Research shows us that if our children and young people have high levels of physical and emotional wellbeing, they will have the resilience to both cope well with adversity and to achieve to the best of their ability. The impact of having such an outlook has been found to be a protective factor from early years to secondary school and from low-risk to high-risk populations. The negative impact of not having the protection of the above outlook however, is thought to be greatest for children in areas of multiple deprivation.
7.2	We also aspire for our children and young people to be able to regulate their own emotions and seek support appropriately from others. When children can manage their own emotions well, known as the ability to *self-regulate*, they can: • Accept challenges at school • Raise academic achievement • Manage anxiety in order that it does not interfere with learning.
7.3	Highland Council PPR guidance draws on best practice and research to support staff in early years' settings and schools to understand and support distressed children, rather than taking a punitive approach that will often be shaming or re-traumatising. Increasingly the evidence points to the importance of school connectedness and school relationships in terms of long-term positive outcomes for pupils and where the focus is on building positive relationships and supporting pupils, academic and social outcomes for all children and staff are enhanced (Learner & Kruger, 1997[7]; Bergin & Bergin, 2009[8]).
7.4	Universal approaches in Highland are underpinned by an ethos of restorative practice, being solution oriented and emotionally literate. This is supported by programmes such as Resilient Kids, Rights Respecting Schools, Nurture for All, Words Up, Emerging Literacy etc. These approaches have been implemented at key stages, from first booking in maternity services, through to transition from school to post-school. Such programmes support attuned relationships and stress buffering for all children and young people and support the universal services to identify where a more targeted approach may be required.

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[7] Learner, D. G. and Kruger, L. J. (1997), Attachment, self-concept and academic motivation in high school students. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 67(3),* 485-492

[8] Bergin, C. and Bergin, D. (2009) Attachment in the Classroom, *Educational Psychology Review, volume 21 (2),* pp 141-170

7.5	Evidence remains strong that these overarching whole system approaches are essential to support positive relationships within the context of a school or early years setting. The PPR Guidance explains this rational in detail and lists the range of research evidence in support of our approach. It also outlines how these approaches support Highland Council's statements regarding being Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Aware and Trauma Informed.
7.6	Targeted supports from specialist services, are complimented by programmes such as emotional coaching, parenting support, Growing2gether, Seasons4growth, nurture bases etc that can be offered to support children, young people and their families, where greater levels of support and more targeted interventions are required to address individual needs.
7.7	Over the past 10 years we have also increased the knowledge and understanding of staff through the delivery of regular training inputs on embedding the essential principles of building positive relationships, understanding early and teenage brain development, building resilience through the use of the resilience matrix, understanding the effects of adverse childhood experiences and the impact of trauma, neglect and substance use on classroom behaviour etc.
7.8	Discussion of positive relationships often focusses on behaviour, but there is evidence that warm and supportive relationships with teachers can improve children and young people's academic outcomes, especially for those who struggle with learning (Eisenhower et al., 2007[9]). Nurturing, establishing and maintaining positive relationships is a necessary part of efforts to raise attainment and neglecting this aspect of school life can be a key cause for limited returns from other educational interventions and reforms, no matter how well evidenced or costly.
8.	**Managing behaviour that challenges**
8.1	It is recognised that there are times when children and young people will exhibit challenging and distressed behaviour. Staff's knowledge and detailed assessment of a child or young person should be used to predict and plan for the type of situation which may cause that child or young person severe stress or frustration that can lead to challenging and distressed behaviour. Staff should recognise that all behaviour is communication and endeavour to identify, where possible, the triggers that may lead to a child or young person acting in a challenging and distressed way.
8.2	As a last resort, Head Teachers have the delegated power to exclude a child from school. The national guidance (Included, Engaged and Involved – part 2) sets the use of exclusion from school within the context of approaches which promote positive relationships and behaviours, early intervention and de-escalation to prevent the need for the use of physical intervention, seclusion or exclusion from school. This guidance is reflected in our own policy on Managing School Exclusions which also reflects the rights of all children and young people as a key consideration where exclusion is being considered.
8.3	Employers must of course assess risks to employees and make arrangements for their health and safety by effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review. This

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[9] Eisenhower, A. S., Baker, B. L., & Blacher, J. (2007). Early student–teacher relationships of children with and without intellectual disability: Contributions of behavioral, social, and self-regulatory competence. *Journal of School Psychology*, *45*(4), 363-383.

	includes protecting employees from the risk of violence and ensuring staff understand their responsibilities in terms of planning to meet needs and the use of inclusive practice, de-escalation and physical intervention.
9.	**The potential of schools**
	Positive relationships are key both to preventing inappropriate behaviour from students and to addressing it when it arises (O'Connor et al., 2011[10]). Within a developmental understanding, it should be expected that any and all children and young people will, from time to time, struggle with following norms and rules. Positive relationships do not mean an absence of conflict and difficulty (McGrath & Bergen, 2015[11]), but do mean that how the adult interprets issues and then acts on that interpretation are the decisive factors. Proportionate responses require an understanding not just of what is happening for the student, but also the assumptions being made by the adults.
9.1	Many young people may not be experiencing positive relationships in the home or community. As such, they may present in school or the early years' setting with either externalising or internalising behaviours that make it difficult to form positive relationships with the adults around them or with their peers. These young people are more likely to end up in escalating cycles of coercive control (Decker et al., 2007[12]). However, when warm, supportive relationships can be established, this can lead to improved behaviour and attainment (Silver et al., 2005[13]; Baker, 2006[14]; Baker et al., 2008[15]).
9.2	As children move beyond the early years', teachers and other adults in school have a high potential to "reset" acquired templates for relationships and behaviours. Although traditionally it tends to be assumed that parents have the most decisive influence, research evidence supports the many anecdotes that a caring teacher can be the source of resilience in a young person's life that can help "turn it around" (Pianta, et al., 2003[16]).
9.3	This does not mean that a class teacher is expected to, or should, take on inappropriate professional roles. They are not expected to "treat" mental health issues or resolve social care issues. But it is essential that they recognise that these and other issues impact on a child's learning and behaviour and adapt accordingly, as for

[10] O'Connor, E. E., Dearing, E., & Collins, B. A. (2011). Teacher-child relationship and behavior problem trajectories in elementary school. *American Educational Research Journal*, *48*(1), 120-162.

[11] McGrath, K. F., & Van Bergen, P. (2015). Who, when, why and to what end? Students at risk of negative student–teacher relationships and their outcomes. *Educational Research Review*, *14*, 1-17.

[12] Decker, D.M., Dona, D.P. & Christenson, S.L. (2007). Behaviorally at-risk African American students:The importance of student–teacher relationships for student outcomes, *Journal of School Psychology, 45*, 83-109.

[13] Silver, R.B., Measelle, J.R., Armstrong, J.M. & Essex, M.J. (2005). Trajectories of classroom externalizing behavior: Contributions of child characteristics, family characteristics, and the teacher–child relationship during the school transition, *Journal of School Psychology, 43*, 39-60.

[14] Baker, J. A. (2006). Contributions of teacher–child relationships to positive school adjustment during elementary school, *Journal of School Psychology, 44*, 211-229.

[15] Baker, J. A., Grant, S., & Morlock, L. (2008). The teacher-student relationship as a developmental context for children with internalizing or externalizing behavior problems. *School Psychology Quarterly, 23*(1), 3-15.

[16] Pianta, R. C., & Stuhlman, M. W. (2004). Teacher-child relationships and children's success in the first years of school. *School psychology review*, *33*(3), 444.

	any pupil with additional support needs. Making reasonable adjustments for positive relationships will lead to better learning and easier classroom management.
9.4	Reasonable adjustments include the adults considering their own expectations first, especially in relation to the language used in communicating with the child. Taking time to pause and wait, when asking a question, or looking for a verbal response, allows the child to feel less pressure and more listened to/valued. Looking for the specific progression that relates to an individual child in a timescale that suits the child, would be an example of making reasonable adjustments within a classroom context or early years setting.
9.5	It is generally more effective to consider how the environment can be modified to prevent overwhelming challenge to the child or young person until they have come to be able to manage it. For example, low level fidgeting in class can start as an attempt to regulate feelings of boredom or disconnection that are uncomfortable. Requiring the pupil to suppress the behaviour may lead to continuance or escalation, while responding with adaptation of the task, or just making a connection may resolve the need in the first place.
9.6	Taking a developmental approach to understanding behaviour meets the legislative requirement to make reasonable adjustments to support pupils with additional needs. Understanding the function of the behaviour will inform the appropriate planning and intervention to support the continuing development of the child/young person at any age. In creating support plans for children and young people for whom there are significant or long-term concerns, the key components of positive relationships should therefore also be considered, alongside environmental factors and an understanding of child or adolescent development.
9.7	While it is reasonable for staff to take whatever steps are needed to ensure safety and good order at the time of a behavioural issue, to help bring about change in the long term it is helpful to be curious about the function of the behaviour and what help the pupil might need to develop one or all of the key components noted above. This approach may often go a long way to resolving issues outside the learning environment too, or in helping the child or young person to flourish, because issues, pressures and strengths, impact on the whole of a child or young person's world.
10.	**Actions to continue Promoting Positive Relationships in Highland Schools**
10.1	Highland Council Education and Learning Service has a policy framework in line with national guidance. This includes the guidance on Promoting Positive Relationships and Managing Exclusions. Head teachers still have the discretion to use exclusion as a last resort with the understanding that this brings with it the loss of a sense of belonging and trust which then requires to be rebuilt on the child's return to school.
10.2	Early and staged intervention provides a framework for additional support where behaviour, for whatever reason, becomes more challenging and is the process through which assessment and intervention may move from universal to targeted services. Work within the GIRFEC principles can also integrate support and planning with other professionals from health and social care. The planned training for professionals on the refreshed GIRFEC guidance before the summer break, will further support this practice.

10.3	Training on maintaining positive relationships in schools and ELCs is delivered regularly through the CPD Calendar. It is mandatory training for all Newly Qualified Teachers starting their practice in Highland.
10.4	Training is also delivered to support staff through de-escalation, understanding adversity and trauma, environmental audits to reduce triggers, supporting parents, pupil participation, developing emotional literacy etc. These are all in line with the recommendations from the BISS report. These sessions are delivered regularly through the Staff Development Calendar by Highland Council Psychological Service.
10.5	Collaborative Lead Officers support schools to match their curricular offer to the needs of pupils through differentiation of the knowledge and tasks offered at different ages and stages. Keeping expectations in line with ability has the best chance of maintaining pupil motivation and engagement.
10.6	Individual support for developing emotional regulation is provided to pupils in ELCs and schools across Highland from a variety of agencies and services to support their skills development. Services also support the adults around those children where needs are identified.
10.7	Where required, support on risk assessments, intervention, use of resources, adapting the environment etc. is available from support staff and professionals in specialist services eg Health and Safety officers, Educational Psychologists etc.
10.8	In line with the BISS Report, it is acknowledged that engagement with parents can have a positive impact on pupil engagement and behaviour in schools. The Highland Parental Engagement and Participation Strategy can therefore add to the range of supports available to promote positive behaviour in schools.
10.9	The process for recording Pupil-Staff Incidents was reviewed in 2023 to make it easier for staff to record incidents and to reduce the bureaucracy of the process. This ensures all incidents are captured in the first instance and can be analysed and supported appropriately.
10.10	Exclusions are recorded and tracked on a monthly basis at a school, Area and central officer level. This allows patterns to be observed and interventions and supports to be offered to targeted schools. The guidance on managing exclusions has recently been reviewed to ensure it remains in line with national guidance and legal requirements.
10.11	Analysis of the data has provided opportunities for staff development and support to address identified issues eg. The peak of pupil-staff incidents is in P3 due to limited skills in self-regulation and language development at a time when academic expectations rise. The number of incidents reduces when a language rich environment is provided and reduces further when this is done early. The language lag in young children returning to ELCs after the COVID lockdowns also came through the collation of data from the Developmental Overviews. This highlighted the need to provide a general input to develop language for all children in ELC, who might get frustrated in a social setting without these skills.
	Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Education and Learning Date: 9 February 2024

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Background Papers: Linked and referenced throughout the document. |