



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Anti Social Behaviour Scrutiny Panel – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023

### Education Directorate response to Anti Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry Panel

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide a response to the Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry Panel in relation to the work of the Education Directorate.
<b>Content:</b>	Responses to the specific questions asked in relation to the inquiry.
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	Consider the information provided.
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
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#### 1. Background

1.1 The Education Directorate has been asked to provide a response to the Anti Social Behaviour Scrutiny Inquiry. This report outlined that response.

2. **The role of the Education Directorate:** The role of the Education Directorate in relation to tackling and reducing anti social behaviour focuses primarily on both prevention and managing any impact anti social behaviour may have within school communities. The Directorate work alongside other council directorates and outside agencies to ensure that timely advice, support and guidance is provided to schools to ensure they have the tools to prevent, educate and address any impact of anti social behaviour within schools.

Anti-social behaviour in schools can impact on the school community in a number of ways including disruption to the smooth running of the school day and learnt anti-social behaviour within pupil's own communities which can be exhibited in school environments. A small number of children and young people who do not attend school on a regular basis become vulnerable to engaging in ASB in their community

Swansea Education Directorate's behaviour policy focuses on promoting positive behaviours and healthy relationships. We focus on prevention and inclusion as an approach to ensure learners explore and understand healthy,

safe relationships and behaviours. When this is not achieved we have a range of strategies to manage more challenging behaviours and support children and young people to reengage positively and swiftly with educational opportunities. Our school improvement officers can also support schools to develop curriculum and pastoral offers which emphasise the importance of safe and healthy relationships.

- 3. Response to the five principles.** There are five key principles in responding to anti social behaviour. These are outlined below along with detail of the ways in which Education Directorate and schools in Swansea respond:

Principle 1. Victims should be encouraged to report ASB and expect to be taken seriously. They should have clear ways to report, have access to help and support to recover, and be given the opportunity to choose restorative approaches to tackling ASB.

Principle 2. Agencies will have clear and transparent processes to ensure that victims can report ASB concerns, can understand how the matter will be investigated and are kept well informed of progress once a report is made.

Individual schools' behaviour policies will set out clear ways for any pupil to report anti social behaviour observed. Support is provided for any child who has been affected by the behaviour of their peers, such as exchange counselling, pastoral support, and youth worker sessions.

Most schools are now implementing a trauma informed environment which seeks to de-escalate through a variety of emotion coaching techniques. Through additional funding the Education Directorate have been able to secure 90 places for school based practitioners to attend a level 3 trauma informed diploma. Trauma informed practice in schools aims to increase teachers, staff and practitioners' awareness of how trauma can negatively impact individual children and the whole school community. This includes children and young people's ability to feel safe, and develop trusting relationships with others. It is too early to understand outcomes however, initial feedback is very positive.

Principle 3. Agencies and practitioners will work across boundaries to identify, assess and tackle ASB and its underlying causes. Referral pathways should be clearly set out between services and published locally. This includes pathways for the community trigger and health services.

The Education directorate works collaboratively with other departments within the council as well as external agencies to ensure information is shared in a timely and appropriate way. This includes education representation in Early Help Hubs and on the Contextualised Exploited Missing and Trafficked (CMET) strategic and operational groups. There are clear referral mechanisms into these multi agency groups.

Principle 4. The public's ASB concerns should always be considered both nationally and locally in strategic needs assessments for community safety. Best practice should be shared through a network of ASB experts within each community safety partnership, each policing area and nationally.

Officers recently took part in ADEW problem solving sessions in relation to improving attendance, reducing exclusion and link with colleagues in other authorities. On a local level Education officers attend multiagency and cross

directorate strategic and operational groups to ensure links are made between issues in school and the community, most notably CMET groups.

Principle 5. Adults and children who exhibit ASB should have the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour and repair the harm caused by it. Agencies should deliver appropriate interventions, which may include criminal justice options, based on the seriousness, risks and vulnerabilities of the case.

Schools' behaviour policies outline actions which the school will take to administer consequences in the case of inappropriate behaviour. Children who exhibit ASB are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour and repair the harm caused by it. Restorative behaviour support is often adopted in schools with input from the school's police liaison officer.

Schools deliver appropriate interventions, based on the seriousness, risks and vulnerabilities of the case. In serious cases where exclusions are issued, the Education Directorate will assist the head teacher in exploring all avenues for support and signposting to appropriate agencies, such as the Early Help Hub referral, Youth Justice Service prevention referral, as well as third sector agencies such as Media academy and BAROD if needed.

Each incident is logged so that schools are able to build up a picture of need, most schools use My Concern as a recording mechanism. We are currently reviewing the effectiveness of this as a tool to oversee incidents from a school wide perspective.

- 4 Key challenges.** The key challenges for the Education are around low attendance, and persistent non-attendance and a rise in behaviours leading to school exclusions. This is a national picture, and despite ranking 6<sup>th</sup> in Wales, attendance is a high priority area for improvement. We want our children in school with more opportunities for successful engagement which distracts from antisocial behaviour. An action plan for attendance and engagement is in final stages of development. Improving attendance and increasing inclusion are key strategic priorities for the Education Directorate but set against challenging budgetary constraints for both schools and the local authority.

We are also implementing our action plan in relation to preventing peer on peer abuse in response to Estyn's 2021 report We Don't Tell Our Teachers. The intention is to both prevent and respond better to incidents of peer and peer abuse, including those incidents generated by use of social media.

- 5. Engagement.** The current action plan to improve attendance is considering ways in which we can improve information to families through the use of social media and better use of website pages. This is currently in development. Schools' curriculum and pastoral offers are shared with parents via their usual channels and will include the focus on developing safe and healthy relationships.
- 6. Information available.** Behaviour, attendance and curriculum policies are available on an individual schools website. Each school will have its own policies and information for parents, and an appropriate methods of communication with parents which works best for each school community. The Education Directorate strategies are reflected in the wider Swansea Council corporate policies available on the Council's website.
- 7. Reporting.** Schools will work with reporters or victims, and their parents, of antisocial behaviour in school. They use pupil voice effectively to improve their

processes. Education officers are able to support this through the work of our Education Welfare Service, Pupil Inclusion Team and multi agency network working.

8. **Data.** Attendance data for each school is shared monthly via Welsh Government, and this informs the direction of work for the Education Welfare Service. Pupil mobility data, including exclusion data, is collated termly and published annually giving data rich information and enables us to spot trends to inform future work streams. Data is shared with colleagues across directorate through relevant groups to provide a bigger picture of need throughout Swansea.
9. The Education Directorate meets all regulatory obligations in terms of attendance, exclusions and safeguarding.
10. **Multi agency working** is a key feature of the work of the Education Directorate and we are currently finalising an inclusion strategy which encompasses our priorities for supporting vulnerable learners over the next three years. We are committed to working in multi agency contexts to consider and respond to community issues. We considered our response to significant events such as the Mayhill riots and have strengthened our practice accordingly. We have developed strong responses in supporting schools and school communities following difficult community issues and this is now embedded in our practice. Education officers across the Pupil Support teams and Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Teams are clear how to respond and support schools when unexpected community issues arise. The focus on prevention is important but equally a wrap around support for school and learners is critical when needed and this includes a range of strategies, as appropriate to the circumstances, which could include; counselling offer for learners and staff, educational psychologist support, education safeguarding and child protection support and links into our CMET and Early Help Hubs via our Education Welfare Service.
11. **The Key objectives** for the Education Directorate in relation to anti social behaviour are outlined in our draft Inclusion Strategy. We have a strong focus on prevention by supporting school communities, children and young people and their families to build safe and healthy relationships. We have five key priorities and the three that relate most specifically to addressing anti social behaviour are increasing attendance, promoting inclusion and supporting emotional health and wellbeing.
12. Finally, to outline the way in which the Education Directorate works in partnership across the council and other partners, we are engaged in a number of groups, strategies and interventions which include the work around; Community focussed schools, NEET prevention, the Cynnydd fund and transition to Shared Prosperity Funding and the strategies to increase engagement via these funds, our strategy to reduce Emotionally Based School Avoidance, our multi agency working with CMET, Youth Justice Services and Early Help Hubs and our work developing Whole School Approaches to Emotional Health and Wellbeing. We are also involved with regional partnerships including the Western Bay Safeguarding Board and West Glamorgan Children and Young Peoples Programme Board.

Our greatest challenges in terms of securing impact and improvement are around funding and the implications on capacity of staffing. While our

approaches focus on prevention and building capacity the importance of building positive relationship is significant and that requires more resource than we have available.

13. **Legal implications.** This report is for information only
14. **Finance Implications.** This report is for information only
15. **Equality & Engagement Implications.** This report is for information only.