

Integrated Impact Assessment Form

Promoting Equality, Human Rights and Sustainability



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Title of Policy/ Proposal	Positive approaches to promoting attendance
Completion Date	21 st September 2023
Completed by	Kirsty Quinn
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Type of Initiative:

Policy/Strategy

Programme/Plan

Project

Service

Function

Other

Statement of Intent.....

New or Proposed

Changing/Updated

Review or existing

1. Briefly describe the policy/proposal you are assessing.

Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed (e.g. objectives, aims) including the context within which it will operate.

The attendance policy aims to ensure there is a clear, consistent, proactive and evidence-based approach to supporting the attendance of children and young people at school.

The policy seeks to ensure that:

1. Attendance is protected and promoted at universal whole school level
2. There is a focus on analysis and prevention for children and young people that may be at risk of non-attendance
3. Early action pathways are followed to restore attendance in response to early signs of non-attendance
4. Pathways and partnerships are effective in supporting children and young people presenting with persistent non-attendance

2. What will change as a result of this policy?

Systems and pathway to support will be clearer and more consistent across Midlothian. There will be greater understanding across schools and partners in relation to attendance issues and ways of supporting. Ultimately, it is hoped that attendance for children and young people will improve.

3. Do I need to undertake a Combined Impact Assessment?

High Relevance	Yes/no
The policy/ proposal has consequences for or affects people	Yes
The policy/proposal has potential to make a significant impact on equality	Yes
The policy/ proposal has the potential to make a significant impact on the economy and the delivery of economic outcomes	No
The policy/proposal is likely to have a significant environmental impact	No
Low Relevance	
The policy/proposal has little relevance to equality	No
The policy/proposal has negligible impact on the economy	No
The policy/proposal has no/ minimal impact on the environment	No
If you have identified low relevance please give a brief description of your reasoning here and send it to your Head of Service to record.	

If you have answered yes to high relevance above, please proceed to complete the Integrated Impact Assessment.

4. What information/data/ consultation have you used to inform the policy to date?

Evidence	Comments: what does the evidence tell you?
Data on populations in need	<p>Analysis of attendance patterns show that certain groups of children and young people are at risk of low attendance in comparison to the wider population. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children and young people eligible for Free School Meals and those experiencing economic deprivation. On average children living in areas SIMD quintile 1 are attending 7.5% less than those in SIMD quintile 5. - Children and young people with Additional Support Needs particularly those with needs relating to mental health, and social, emotional and behavioural needs. - Care experienced children and young people, particularly those who were previously looked after or looked after at home <p>We do not hold data relating to race or sexual orientation. The most recent census data from 2011 states that 1.8% population belonged to a Minority Ethnic Community.</p>
Data on service uptake/access	<p>All schools use the attendance policy to guide practice in promoting and recording attendance and responding reduced attendance levels.</p> <p>There have been very high levels of engagement in professional learning events focusing on strengthening pathways and partnership to promote attendance.</p>
Data on quality/outcomes	<p>Analysis has taken place to identify approaches and practice that have led to positive impact on attendance and this has informed the policy. Examples of effective use of PEF spend have been identified where this has had a significant impact on attendance.</p>
Research/literature evidence	<p>The Education Endowment Foundation (2022), publication 'Attendance interventions rapid evidence assessment' shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research evidence is variable and inconclusive. 8 approaches are evidenced in the literature with most effective approaches focusing on parental engagement and targeted support. There is little evidence of systemic approaches to purposeful or flexible curriculum. <p>Children's Commissioner (2023) Attendance is everyone's business:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasises the need for children’s rights and voices to be at the centre of planning and the need to deepen our understanding of issues to target support most effectively.
<p>Service user experience information</p>	<p>Feedback from head teachers (primary), DHTs (secondary), home school practitioners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Range of creative and impactful approaches in place but not consistent or joined up as part of a wider strategy across the authority. - Pathways unclear to support and feel that the procedures do not make any significant difference to attendance. - Need for clarity on use of SEEMIS codes to promote consistency and reliability of data trends. - Need for greater clarity in the role of partners at different levels of attendance and in response to different types of concerns and issues.
<p>Consultation and involvement findings</p>	<p>Children and young people from primary and secondary schools were asked a series of questions relating to attendance and the policy to elicit their understanding of approaches taken to promote and support attendance and what is seen as helpful. Amendments were made to the policy in light of the views shared below:</p> <p><i>Summary of findings from children and young people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most children and young people were not aware of the policy though there was agreement that guidance was needed to ensure consistency across schools. - Children and young people noted that some young people and their families have lots going on and need support to maintain school attendance. - Young people mentioned the following approaches that support attendance: communication with families, regular focus in school, support from key adults including guidance teachers, learning assistants to understand issues, support from social work for families. Some young people felt that nothing happens and were not aware of what the school would do. - Feedback highlighted that the policy was too long and wordy and should be shortened and made more accessible. Ideas to ensure everyone was aware included using social media, information evenings, parents evenings, websites, leaflets, pupil councils.

	<p><i>Summary of findings from parents and carers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Around half of the parents/carers consulted had awareness of the policy though were not familiar with the content. Parents/carers were aware of their role in reporting their child's absence. - There was a strong emphasis on the need for a supportive approach recognising that for some children, aspects of school can be challenging, and that some families go through times of significant stress that can impact on attendance. - There needs to be balance between protecting a child's wellbeing and mental health while also supporting attendance. - Concerns were raised about certificates and rewards for 100% attendance and the implications for children where there may be significant challenges beyond their control. - Some concern about the level of responsibility placed on children and parents and the need for a sensitive, balanced approach to understand issues and provide support. - Feedback reported that the policy needs to be accessible to everyone.
<p>Good practice guidelines</p>	<p>The following good practice guidelines have been reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance (2019) - West Lothian and Forth Valley Interactive Attendance Guide - West Sussex Emotionally Based School Avoidance Guidance Document, 2022 Emotionally Based School Avoidance West Sussex Services for Schools
<p>Other (please specify)</p>	<p>Pupil Equity Funding: looking inwards, outwards, forwards – sharing effective practice to maximise support for learners and practitioners (2022)</p>
<p>Is any further information required? How will you gather this?</p>	

5. How does the policy meet the different needs of and impact on groups in the community?

	Comments – positive/ negative impact
<p>Equality Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people, people in the middle years, • Young people and children • Women, men and transgender people (includes issues relating to pregnancy and maternity) • Disabled people (includes physical disability, learning disability, sensory impairment, long-term medical conditions, mental health problems) • Minority ethnic people (includes Gypsy/Travellers, migrant workers, non-English speakers) • Refugees and asylum seekers • People with different religions or beliefs (includes people with no religion or belief) • Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people • People who are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership 	<p>There will be clearer pathways of support to promote and protect attendance of all children and young people.</p> <p>Data analysis within each school and across Midlothian will raise awareness of groups at risk of non-attendance and enable more preventative and targeted support to be developed. Groups at risk of reduced attendance include those with disabilities and additional support needs, affected by poverty and care experience young people.</p>
<p>Those vulnerable to falling into poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • People on benefits • Single Parents and vulnerable families • Pensioners • Looked after children • Those leaving care settings (including children and young people and those with illness) • Homeless people • Carers (including young carers) • Those involved in the criminal justice system • Those living in the most deprived communities (bottom 20% SIMD areas) • People misusing services 	<p>The policy recognises that those children and young people affected by poverty are at risk of reduced levels of attendance at school.</p> <p>The policy promotes targeted action is taken along with effective use of Pupil Equity Fund to promote and support school attendance.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with low literacy/numeracy • Others e.g. veterans, students 	
Geographical communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural/ semi rural communities • Urban Communities • Coastal communities 	<p>Further consideration is needed on transport issues that impact on a child's attendance including times of arrival of school buses at schools. This will be followed up as part of the attendance strategy workstreams.</p>

6. Are there any other factors which will affect the way this policy impacts on the community or staff groups?

7. Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

If yes, how have you included equality and human rights considerations into the contract?

No

8. Have you considered how you will communicate information about this policy or policy change to those affected e.g. to those with hearing loss, speech impairment or English as a second language?

A webinar will be created with subtitles highlighting the key points of the policy and shared on the council website and available for schools to link to on their websites.

9. Please consider how your policy will impact on each of the following?

Objectives	Comments
Equality and Human rights	

<p>Promotes / advances equality of opportunity e.g. improves access to and quality of services, status</p>	<p>The policy aims to ensure factors affecting children and young people’s attendance at school are understood and overcome promoting access to school and equality of opportunity.</p>
<p>Promotes good relations within and between people with protected characteristics and tackles harassment</p>	<p>The policy promotes a supportive and collaborative approach to attendance and promotes a nurturing, trauma-informed approach. Relationships are central to the policy and restorative approaches are used to deepen understanding and trust within the community.</p>
<p>Promotes participation, inclusion, dignity and self control over decisions</p>	<p>The policy puts the child or young person at the centre of planning and decision making, keeping in mind the child’s strengths, resources as well as their hopes and aspirations for the future. The policy aims to ensure that care is taken to make sense of issues and barriers in partnership with them and their family and in planning out next steps.</p>
<p>Builds family support networks, resilience and community capacity</p>	<p>The policy promotes partnership approaches that build on strengths and resources within families and the community. Where it is agreed that full time attendance within a school building is not in the child’s best interest, community networks are to be explored to create a child’s sense of belonging and contribution.</p>
<p>Reduces crime and fear of crime</p>	<p>There is an established link between school attendance and children and young people becoming involved in anti-social behaviours and the criminal justice system. It is proposed that the policy will lead to increased attendance and reduce the risk of children and young people becoming involved in anti-social behaviours.</p>
<p>Promotes healthier lifestyles including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diet and nutrition, • sexual health, • substance misuse 	<p>Regular school attendance can ensure children and young people gain access to healthy lunch, personal and social education (which includes focus on sexual health and substance misuse), regular PE sessions and life skills that prepare young people for positive destinations.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise and physical activity. • Lifeskills 	
Environmental	
Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in East Lothian (including carbon management)	None
Plan for future climate change	
Pollution: air/ water/ soil/ noise	
Protect coastal and inland waters	
Enhance biodiversity	
Encourage resource efficiency (energy, water, materials and minerals)	
Public Safety: Minimise waste generation/ infection control/ accidental injury /fire risk	
Reduce need to travel / promote sustainable forms or transport	
Improves the physical environment e.g. housing quality, public and green space	
Economic	
Maximises income and /or reduces income inequality	Regular school attendance supports children and young people to prepare for their adult lives with a focus on improved literacy and numeracy and support to move on to positive destinations leading to
Helps young people into	

positive destinations	greater access to jobs.
Supports local business	
Helps people to access jobs (both paid and unpaid)	
Improving literacy and numeracy	
Improves working conditions, including equal pay	
Improves local employment opportunities	

10. Is the policy a qualifying Policy, Programme or Strategy as defined by The Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005?

No

11. Action Plan

Identified negative impact	Mitigating circumstances	Mitigating actions	Timeline	Responsible person

12. Sign off by Head of Service/ NHS Project Lead

Name
Date

