

Equality Impact Assessment Template – Policy, function or strategy

This document should be completed when a new policy, function or strategy is introduced or when a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy is recommended.

1. Policy, function or strategy		
a.	Name/description of the policy, function or strategy ¹	Inverclyde Attendance Policy for Schools
b.	Responsible organisation(s)/Lead Service	Education Services
c.	Lead Officer	Michael Roach, Head of Education
d.	Date of Impact Assessment	13.12.24
e.	Partners/other Services involved in the development of the policy, function or strategy	Inverclyde Educational Psychology Service, Heads of Educational Establishments, the Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership and Education Scotland
f.	Is the policy, function or strategy?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New
		<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed/Revised
g.	What is the purpose of the policy, function or strategy (include details of any new legislation which prompted the introduction of the policy, function or strategy or the substantive change to the policy, function or strategy)?	<p>There is a system-wide concern about reduced levels of attendance in educational establishments since the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of this concern, improving attendance and understanding of the issues around attendance is a priority for all relevant parties across Inverclyde as a community.</p> <p>This priority sits within the Inverclyde Council Education Authority Improvement Plan for the session 2024/25 which includes the following aims:</p>

¹ Please attach details of the policy, function or strategy to this Template

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• C1: Continue to roll out the Attendance Strategy with a particular focus on ensuring highly effective planning for pupils with less than 20% attendance.• E2: Implement the Attendance Strategy as in C1 with a focus on effective planning for pupils who have less than 20% attendance.• F4: Continue with focused work around the attendance of care experienced young people but move towards a collegiate approach and a creation of a tiered response involving social worker colleagues and our wider third sector partners. <p>Children and young people’s progress, attainment and achievements can be impacted by any absence. Evidence suggests that attendance that falls below 90% impacts negatively on progress. The higher the absence, the greater the impact on attainment. National statistics also provide evidence that there is a poverty-related gap in attendance and as such identified Stretch Aims for Inverclyde Council have been agreed to support and track improvements over a 3-year period focusing on Secondary attendance as a whole and Primary attendance of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Quintile 1 pupils.</p>
h.	What are the intended outcomes of the policy, function or strategy?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Policy provides guidance to establishments on procedures that support attendance and reduce absence.2. The Policy will provide legal guidance that educational establishments should follow to maximise attendance.3. The Policy will contain supporting guidance that can be implemented with greater flexibility, based on the school context.4. The Policy will reflect the collaborative approach with partners and families that is required to support attendance and reduce absence in our educational establishments.

i.	Geographical area (Inverclyde-wide or a specific location)	Inverclyde-wide. Whilst the Policy refers to schools in Inverclyde, it is intended that many of the processes and practices should be in place within all local educational establishments, including early years' centres.	
j.	Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy impact on?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
		X	Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups
		X	Foster good relations between people from different groups
k.	Will those who may be directly or indirectly affected by the policy, function or strategy be involved in its development?	Yes, all stakeholders were involved in a consultation exercise, ensuring their contributions support the development of the Policy.	

2. Does the policy, function or strategy impact on:		
	Yes	No
a. Protected Characteristics under The Equality Act 2010: Age; Care experienced; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation (see Section 3)	X	
b. Reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage – Fairer Scotland Duty ² (see Section 6)	X	
c. Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 ³ (see Section 7)	X	

² [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies](#)

³ [Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33](#)

d. Council Plan 2023/28 ⁴ (see Section 8)	X	
3. If 'Yes' is selected for any part of Section 2, please populate the other relevant Sections of this Template.		
4. If 'No' is selected for <u>every part</u> of Section 2, please state the reasons for this.		
<p>Please sign below and email a copy of this Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer: <u>karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk</u></p>		
Signature:	Date:	

3. Impact – Protected Characteristics						
Which of the Protected Characteristics will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?						
	Impact					
Protected Characteristic	Positive High	Low	Neutral	Negative High	Low	Reasons/Comments
Age	X					The Policy will support children, young people and families to maximise attendance and support absence. The Policy will also provide guidance for establishments to support parents/carers to understand attendance issues and how to overcome these.

⁴ [Council Plan 2023/28](#)

Classification: Official

Care experienced	X					The Policy will support care-experienced children and young people to maximise attendance and support absence. The Policy will also provide guidance for establishments to support children, young people and families who are care experienced in improving outcomes.
Disability	X					The Policy will support children, young people and families with a disability to maximise attendance and support absence. Educational research evidences that children, young people, parents and carers identify a range of barriers which hinder or discourage their engagement with their child's school. These encompass a complex mix of issues, including physical barriers to accessing activities due to disability issues. The Policy will support schools and families to develop effective strategies which overcome these barriers.
Gender Reassignment			X			
Marriage and Civil Partnership			X			
Pregnancy and Maternity			X			
Race			X			
Religion and Belief	X					The Policy will support children, young people and families of religion and belief to maximise attendance and support absence.
Sex		X		X		Working with families to ensure good attendance will have a positive impact on care givers who are most often female. Asking that parents do not take holidays during term time could impact on female care givers because of the cost-of-living crisis.
Sexual Orientation			X			

Other groups to consider						The Policy will support children, young people and families who are carers to maximise attendance and support absence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carers 	X					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Armed Forces Covenant Duty 	X					The Policy will support children, young people and families who are defined as part of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty to maximise attendance and support absence, ensuring that schools are able to meet their needs and ensure positive transitions/support.

4. Which parts of the Equality Duty will the policy, function or strategy have an impact upon?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by The Equality Act 2010
X	Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
X	Foster good relations between people from different groups

5. Impact – Groups	
From the information you have highlighted above, describe the positive and negative impacts and the groups affected under The Equality Act 2010.	
Positive impact + <i>(Describe groups affected.)</i>	Negative impact - <i>(Describe groups affected.)</i>
Age: The Policy will support children, young people and families to maximise attendance and support absence. The Policy will also	Sex: Asking that parents do not take holidays during term time could impact on female care givers because of the cost-of-living crisis.

provide guidance for establishments to support parents/carers to understand attendance issues and how to overcome these.

Care-experienced: The Policy will support care-experienced children and young people to maximise attendance and support absence. The Policy will also provide guidance for establishments to support children, young people and families who are care experienced in improving outcomes.

Disability: The Policy will support children, young people and families with a disability to maximise attendance and support absence. Educational research evidences that children, young people, parents and carers identify a range of barriers which hinder or discourage their engagement with their child’s school. These encompass a complex mix of issues, including physical barriers to accessing activities due to disability issues. The Policy will support schools and families to develop effective strategies which overcome these barriers.

Religion and belief: The Policy will provide guidance for children, families and establishments regarding religion and beliefs where absence from school may be required. The Policy will support children, young people and families of religion and belief to maximise attendance and support absence.

Sex: Working with families to ensure good attendance will have a positive impact on care givers who are most often female.

Carers/The Armed Forces Covenant Duty: The Policy will provide clear guidance for carers and for families who are defined as being included in the Armed Forces Covenant Duty to maximise attendance and support absence.

5. Impact – Fairer Scotland Duty

What impact will the policy, function or strategy have on reducing inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage?

Positive impact +	Neutral impact =	Negative impact -
+		
<p>Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on reducing inequalities of outcome.</p> <p>The Policy will directly impact the lives of children and families impacted by poverty, as evidence informs us that they are most at risk of low attendance and disengagement from school. Through the identification of Inverclyde Stretch Aims around attendance, focusing on children impacted by poverty, targeted interventions can be put in place to improve outcomes for the identified children and families.</p>		

7. Impact – Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33

Which Themes from the Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/33 will the policy, function or strategy impact on?

X	<p>Theme 1: Empowered people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities can have their voices heard, and influence the places and services that affect them • Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced
X	<p>Theme 2: Working people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people will be in sustained employment, with fair pay and conditions • Poverty related gaps are addressed, so young people can have the skills for learning, life and work • Businesses are supported and encouraged to reduce their carbon footprint and develop green jobs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Theme 3: Healthy people and places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People live longer and healthier lives • Supportive systems are in place to prevent alcohol and drug misuse • Our natural capital is looked after, and we are effectively adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change

□	<p>Theme 4: A supportive place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable adults and children are protected and supported, ensuring they can live safely and independently • We recognise where people are affected by trauma, and respond in ways that prevent further harm and support recovery • Public protection and community safety are improved through targeting our resources to reduce the risk of offending and harm
□	<p>Theme 5: A thriving place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth in our working age population by encouraging people to stay here, and attracting new people to settle here • Development of strong community-based services that respond to local need • Homes are energy efficient and fuel poverty is reduced • Increased use of active travel and sustainable transport options • Easy access to attractive and safe public spaces, and high-quality arts and cultural opportunities

Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the Inverclyde Alliance Partnership Plan 2023/22 Themes.

Themes 1 and 2: The Policy will directly impact the lives of children and families impacted by poverty as evidence informs us that they are most at risk of low attendance and disengagement from school. Through the identification of Stretch Aims around attendance focusing on children impacted by poverty, targeted interventions can be put in place to improve outcomes for the identified children and families.

8. Impact – Council Plan 2023/28

Which Themes from the Council Plan 2023/28 will the policy, function or strategy impact on?

X	<p>Theme 1: People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education • Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced • People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing • More people will be in employment, with fair pay and conditions • Our most vulnerable families and residents are safeguarded and supported
X	<p>Theme 2: Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are thriving, growing and sustainable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our strategic housing function is robust • Our economy and skills base are developed • We have a sufficient supply of business premises • Our natural environment is protected
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Theme 3: Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality and innovative services are provided, giving value for money • Our employees are supported and developed
<p>Briefly describe how the policy, function or strategy will impact on the Council Plan 2023/28 Themes.</p> <p>Themes 1 and 2: The Policy supports delivery of the Council Plan 2023/28 in relation to the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1.1 - Our young people have the best start in life through high quality support and education • Outcome 1.2 - Gaps in outcomes linked to poverty are reduced • Outcome 1.3 - People are supported to improve their health and wellbeing • Outcome 2.1 - Communities are thriving, growing and sustainable. 	

9. Evidence

What evidence do you have to help identify any potential impacts of the policy, function or strategy?

Note: Evidence could include information from consultations, surveys, the Citizens’ Panel, focus groups, interviews, projects, user feedback, complaints, Officers’ knowledge and experience, equalities monitoring data, publications, research, reports, and local and national groups.

Evidence	Details
Consultation/engagement (including any carried out while developing the policy, function or strategy)	Consultation on the creation of the Policy involved a wide range of stakeholders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of Establishments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Leaders with the responsibility for attendance within establishments• Parents/carers• Children and young people. <p>Those who took part in the consultation process expressed their support for the Policy.</p>
Research	<p>Children and young people’s progress, attainment and achievements can be impacted by any absence. Evidence suggests that attendance that falls below 90% impacts negatively on progress. The higher the absence, the greater the impact on attainment. National statistics also provide evidence that there is a poverty-related gap in attendance and as such identified Stretch Aims for Inverclyde Council have been agreed to support and track improvements over a 3-year period focusing on Secondary attendance as a whole and Primary attendance of SIMD Quintile 1 pupils.</p>
Officers’ knowledge and experience (including feedback from frontline staff)	<p>There has been a greater Scottish Government focus on this issue over the past two years, resulting in the publication over the month of September 2024 of a range of resources, guidance and best practice advice from Education Scotland: <u>Improving attendance in Scotland</u>.</p> <p>Officers’ knowledge continues to be informed by national and international research around maximising attendance and supporting absence.</p> <p>Supporting absence is also key to improving attendance as some children and young people will not be able to attend school for periods of time. However, establishments should still consider ways to support their educational progress while they are absent.</p>
Equalities monitoring data	

User feedback (including complaints)	
Stakeholders	
Other	
Are there information gaps and, if so, what are these?	Gaps will be identified via new published research from Education Scotland and will be incorporated into the Attendance Policy and Strategy development, as appropriate.

10. Consequences of Analysis

What steps will you take in response to the findings of your analysis? Please select at least one of the following and provide a brief explanation.

a.	Continue development with no changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
b.	Continue development with minor alterations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adaptations to the Inverclyde Attendance Policy for Schools and the related Strategy will be made based on new research becoming available.
c.	Continue development with major changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
d.	Discontinue development and consider alternatives (where relevant)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How will the effect of the policy, function or strategy be monitored following implementation?

The Local Authority lead will monitor progress of the Policy through:

- Working together with school leaders to set whole school cultures
- Prioritising attendance and taking an active role in improvement
- Ensuring the accurate recording of learner attendance and absence in accordance with Scottish Government - Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance (2019)
- Ensuring senior leaders fulfil local authority expectations and statutory duties
- Supporting schools to provide training which enhances staff understanding and implementation of the Policy and procedures for the promotion and management of attendance
- Offering opportunities to share effective practice.

The impact of the Policy will be evident in:

- Improved attendance data for establishments
- Improved attendance data for targeted groups in Inverclyde (SIMD 1+2 population)
- Authority Screening Group referrals for support with attendance
- Parental surveys linked to impact.

When is the policy, function or strategy due to be implemented?

The Policy is due to be implemented following its approval at the meeting of the Education and Communities Committee on 21 January 2025.

When will the policy, function or strategy be reviewed?

The Policy will be reviewed in January 2026, unless legislative or other requirements bring this forward.

What resources are available for the implementation of the policy, function or strategy? Have these resources changed?

The appointment of an Authority Attendance Lead Officer will support the continued implementation of the Policy and support the monitoring and tracking of the Policy's progress.

11. Please use the space below to detail any other matters arising from the Equality Impact Assessment process, including what action could be taken to mitigate the impact of the policy, function or strategy.

This document should be cross-referenced with the Equality Impact Assessment on the Attendance Strategy for Schools.

Details of the Person(s) who completed the Assessment:

Name:	Mark Coyle; Jayne Johnson; Michael Roach
Position:	Scottish Attainment Challenge Project Lead; Depute Education Psychologist; Head of Education
Date:	7.1.25

Authorised by:

Name:	Ruth Binks
Position:	Corporate Director – Education, Communities and Organisational Development
Date:	7.1.25

Classification: Official

Please send a copy of the completed Template to Karen Barclay, Corporate Policy and Performance Officer at karen.barclay@inverclyde.gov.uk.