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| Report To: | Education & Communities Committee | Date: | 21 January 2025 |
| Report By: | Ruth Binks Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development | Report No: | EDUCOM/08/2025/MR |
| Contact Officer: | Michael Roach Head of Education | Contact No: | |
| Subject: | Attendance Policy | | |

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present the new attendance policy for over the Education Service (appendix 1.)
- 1.3 The policy was written as one of the key actions against the first priority in the recently approved attendance strategy.
- 1.4 The policy is based on a template version, written and shared nationally by Education Scotland.
- 1.5 The policy has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including Heads of Establishment and colleagues from Children's services and the HSCP
- 1.6 The policy, and associated guidelines, apply to all educational establishments in Inverclyde and are relevant to all children and young people. Whilst the policy refers to schools, it is intended that many of the processes and practices should be in place within all educational establishments including early years.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education and Communities Committee:
- Approves the Attendance Policy.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Attendance Policy has been written in order to ensure clarity of focus and consistency on our approach to supporting establishments to improve the attendance of pupils.
- 3.2 School attendance is a growing concern for educators and services working with children and young people both nationally and internationally. The COVID-19 pandemic created huge disruption for children, families, and educators. We recognise we must increase the 'pull' factors back to our schools to compete with the range of factors that can compound absence.
- 3.3 Since the pandemic, Inverclyde Council's Education Service has been developing practice to both maximise attendance and reduce absence, as well as improve engagement in learning once pupils are in school. We have a solid foundation to work from and many examples of success but are always on a journey to continually improve.
- 3.4 The policy has 4 key aims:
1. This policy provides guidance to establishments on procedures that support attendance and reduce absence.
 2. This policy will provide legal guidance that educational establishments should follow to maximise attendance.
 3. This 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.
- 3.5 This policy is supported by a variety of Inverclyde local action plans and policies highlighting the importance of a collaborative and whole-system approach. These key documents inform practice in Inverclyde and contribute to the creation nurturing and engaging environments for all attending.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Appendix 1 contains the attendance policy. The policy has been completely revised on the back of the recent strategy approved by committee and national best practice.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

| SUBJECT | YES | NO |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Financial | | x |
| Legal/Risk | | x |
| Human Resources | | x |
| Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan) | x | |
| Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing | x | |
| Environmental & Sustainability | | x |
| Data Protection | | x |

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | Budget Years | Proposed Spend this Report | Virement From | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| N/A | | | | | |

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | With Effect from | Annual Net Impact | Virement From (If Applicable) | Other Comments |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| N/A | | | | | |

5.3 Legal/Risk

N/A

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Strategic

This attendance strategy links to the Education Service Plan 2024/25, which links to the overall Council Plan and other relevant plans such as the Children's Service Plan.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

| | |
|---|---|
| X | YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required. It is available to view here: Equality Impact Assessments 2024. |
| | NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement. |

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

| | |
|---|--|
| X | YES – A written statement showing how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed. |
| | NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant. |

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

| | |
|---|---|
| | YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required. |
| X | NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children’s rights. |

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

| | |
|---|---|
| | YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required. |
| X | NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented. |

5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

| | |
|---|--|
| | YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. |
| X | NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. |

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The policy has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including Heads of Establishment and colleagues from Children’s services and the HSCP

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Attendance Policy – Appendix 1