

BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

10TH OCTOBER, 2005

PRESENT – Councillor Armstrong, Copeland and Francis.

APOLOGIES – Councillor Long.

OFFICERS – Mrs. G. Walker, Head of Pupil Support and Jen Todd, Team Leader, School Support and Family Mediator.

The following issues were discussed:

- The Pupil support Team consists of 3 Teacher Coaches and 2 Teaching Assistants.
- Staff training on behavioural management in schools is highly valued.
- Pupil exclusions from school have risen and fixed term exclusions were frequent. The Pupil Support Team was working with Schools to try and take steps to address problems before exclusions occurred. Out of 32 permanent exclusions, however, only 8 were known to the EOTAS Service.
- Parenting Contracts – are a formal agreement between parents and schools intended to improve pupils' behaviour.
- Parenting Orders are issued when parents do not engage with schools to achieve improvements in pupil's behaviour. Orders are usually issued after 2 fixed term exclusions.
- Gill Walker agreed to supply the Group with the statistics on exclusion rates in the Borough's School, school names and the numbers of pupils who had been reintegrated. It was reported that there were significant issues around the numbers and frequency of exclusions.
- The need for a healthy debate between all interested parties to identify all the issues impacting on pupils behavioural problems in an attempt to determine possible solutions.
- Sometimes exclusions are made after one-off incidents and there had been no previous problems. Possible things that cause one-off incidents of bad behaviour are break up of the family, pressures of examinations, which may lead to pupils doing something awful.
- Schools need to be seen to be acting to protect teachers and other pupils and there is sometimes no alternative to exclude.
- The use of 'managed moves' between schools to stop permanent exclusions, which were often successful with the right support. In some cases pupils are persuaded to move and the Pupil Support Teams did not know anything about it.
- Reintegration support was introduced 18 months ago. Gill Walker agreed to supply the Group with the Reintegration Procedure.

- The need to provide opportunities for some pupils to develop who are unsuited to academic studies.
- The Pupil Referral Unit was traditionally geared at non-achievers, but some of these pupils should be taking GCSEs.
- The support given by the Team to pupils during the transition from primary to secondary school. It was reported that at Eastbourne Comprehensive School the more vulnerable transition pupils are kept together in 1 class with 1 teacher before being integrated into school.
- The availability of teacher coaching to assist dealing with challenging behaviour.
- The Pupil Support Team have an ethos of tracking and monitoring pupils with problems to access needs. It also works closely with other agencies. Behaviour and progress needs to be considered in tandem – not in isolation.
- The opportunity through Children’s Services Department for joined up working and the extension of the support given by the Pupil Support Team , which was only during school hours and not out of school hours.
- The need for the Pupil Support Services to be welcoming to parents with a problem and the need for a quick response to problems.
- Discussions are held at the Head Teachers meetings with the Director of Children Services to make sure that excluded pupils are offered appropriate placements. This is tied in with the ‘Hard to Place’ agenda.
- There are whole families in the PRU.
- An analysis has been undertaken of the reasons for transfers between schools.
- Multi-Agency meetings are held to talk about any pupils that are ‘out of the system/or in risk’. There were 250 cases identified last year as out of the system. Investigating these takes a considerable amount of time. Darlington schools do not take pupils off the roll unless they are on another one. Some children are not on any roll for example some Travellers’ children.
- Parenting Contracts could be useful and can be tailored to a particular situation. A Parenting Officer and also the Education Welfare Service can offer support. There is, however, nothing that the school can do if these contracts are not adhered to. The Youth Offending Team get involved in some Parenting Contract. Some parents completely engaged with this process, but it still not make a difference to pupils’ behaviour. It does have a positive effect in some cases.
- Promotion of initiatives through Governing Bodies.

IT WAS AGREED - That the Task and Finish Review Group's terms of reference would be to add value to the Pupil Support Service by increasing awareness of the support available, which could hopefully be further developed by the Children's Services Department where people can work together to provide early intervention to reduce permanent exclusions.

To achieve this the Group would:

1. Seek clarification of what is available to deal with children's behavioural problems in relation to resources, people, structures and finance.
2. Obtain information on the size of the problem in relative terms and the categories and national statistics.
3. Consider indicators for earlier intervention.

IT WAS ALSO AGREED - (a) That the Group undertake visits to the Pupil Referral Unit at McMullen House, Central House EOTAS, and the Old Eastbourne Nursery.

(b) That the Group talk to the Youth Offending Team and CAMHS.