

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE – 1 MARCH 2012

PROPOSALS FOR CHANGES TO THE EDUCATION (SCHOOL AND PLACING INFORMATION)
(SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1982 (“THE 1982 REGULATIONS”)

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

ABSTRACT:

This report outlines Scottish Government proposals to rewrite “The 1982 Regulations” to improve the range and scope of information provided to parents and carers, in particular, through the publication of School Handbooks.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Sub-Committee/Committee/Council

- (i) note the terms of this report
- (ii) note the Scottish Government’s intention to bring forward legislation to change the way in which information about schools is provided to parents and carers, in particular, via school handbooks
- (iii) note the continuing commitment of the education service to ensure that parents and carers across Angus have access to high quality information about their child’s school, and services across Education.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 All Local Authority schools are required to produce School Handbooks on an annual basis. The contents of these handbooks is specified by The Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations 1982. Although individual schools can personalise many aspects of the handbook, key content areas require to be included.

2.2 In Angus, school handbooks are prepared by Head Teachers, using a template provided by centrally based staff. Handbooks are usually available in January each year to support in particular, parents of children in nursery and P7 in choosing a school for their child for the following school session.

2.3 During school session 2010-2011 the Scottish Government undertook a public consultation on School Handbooks and better information for parents and carers. The findings of this consultation can be found at

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/an/AngusParentCouncilGroup/files/2011/10/School-Handbooks-Overall-Report-for-the-Public-Consultation.pdf>

2.4 The main findings of the consultation were that:

- there is a need to clarify the purpose of the school handbook
- parents are keen to access school specific information at different stages of their child’s learning
- parents use handbooks when choosing a school for their child and seek a wealth of information about the practicalities of school life

- parents want high quality information about the curriculum and school performance
- there is an increasing demand for electronic access to School Handbooks and related information

2.5 Angus Council Education Service officers shared these findings with Parent Council Representatives at meetings in October and November 2011. Parents worked in groups to discuss the contents of current handbooks and consider possible changes and improvements. There was a particular interest in school handbooks being written in parent friendly language, being jargon-free, being available in electronic format, and having direct inputs from parents. A note of Angus Parent Council Representatives' comments can be found at: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/an/AngusParentCouncilGroup/files/2010/11/Overview-of-Key-Issues-of-Meetings-with-Parent-Council-Reps-October-November-2011.doc>

2.6 Angus parents would welcome the involvement of parents and pupils in the preparation of handbooks.

2.7 Following this consultation activity it was agreed that the revision of the Angus School Handbook template would take account of the very practical feedback received from parents as well as the new legislative requirements which the Scottish Government is minded to introduce.

3. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

Recently received information from the Scottish Government has advised authorities of the intention to rewrite Part II (School Information) of Schedule 1 to the 1982 Regulations in the spring of 2012. The legislative revisions proposed will be accompanied by an expectation that handbooks should also signpost the availability of other sources of key school information, including on-line sources. The changes to the 1982 Regulations will require the following types of information to be made available in school handbooks:

3.1 Parental Involvement

- a statement of how the school ensures that parents are partners in their children's education
- how the school seeks and takes account of parental views on the education it provides
- the opportunities which the school provides for parents to become involved in the life of the school and how it communicates with parents, including how it promotes and uses ICT to support parental engagement.
- how the school gives information, support and advice to parents to help them support their child's learning and help them at key stages of their child's education, particularly when choices are being made.
- how the school involves parents and pupils in evaluating the school's performance (such as audits, questionnaires, open events)
- a link to the local authority parental involvement strategy

3.2 Contact Details of the School

- the name, address, telephone number of the school, email address and website (if one exists), the present roll, the stages covered, denominational status (if any) and, if the school admits pupils of one sex only, the sex admitted
- the head teacher's name and the names and roles of other staff (teaching and non-teaching)
- name, address, email address and website (if one exists) for Parent Council (or any other parent organisations)
- who to contact if parents have a concern about their child and how this will be dealt with
- who to contact in case of child's absence/sickness
- who to contact if parents have a complaint and how this will be handled
- arrangements for parents, offered or seeking a place for their child in the school, to visit the school

3.3 **School Ethos**

- a statement of the school's culture, ethos and values, its aspirations for all learners, its role in the community and how it works with all its partners including parents, and how it promotes positive behaviour, good relationships and motivates learners
- The actions the school undertakes to develop a shared understanding of this ethos and culture
- the role parents have in shaping and supporting this

3.4 **Curriculum for Excellence**

To help parents understand their child's learner journey through the school, an outline of how Curriculum for Excellence is planned and provided at the school, including:

- how the school will provide the entitlements of Curriculum for Excellence for each child and young person
- how the school is encouraging its pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- the different subjects and how these are connected to provide a Broad General Education
- the different opportunities and learning options that are available in the Senior Phase
- the expectation of progression through the curriculum levels
- the opportunities to develop knowledge and skills for learning, life and work, including literacy, numeracy and health and well being within and beyond the classroom
- the ways in which the entitlement to personalisation and choice for all learners is delivered
- the arrangements of support to move on after school to a positive destination, including how careers and financial information, advice and guidance is provided
- in health and wellbeing, how parents will be informed of any sensitive aspects of learning
- the provision for religious instruction and observance and arrangements for parents who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child

3.5 **Assessment**

- the arrangements and approaches for tracking and assessing pupils' progress and planning next steps in learning
- the involvement of children and young people in assessing their own progress and that of their peers
- the arrangements for recognising and recording the range of broader achievements including arrangement for P7 and S3 profiles

3.6 **Reporting**

- the arrangements for ongoing and end of year reporting to parents on progress in curriculum areas, achievements and next steps to learning
- the opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress with staff

3.7 **Transitions**

- a summary of the arrangements in place to support all children and young people making transitions and what role parents can play (including moving into P1 from a range of pre-school provision and transition to S1, and on leaving school)
- the arrangements in place for schools to work with other schools and partners in their local cluster area/learning network to support transition, including early years, college and business sector
- the contact details of the school (if any) to which pupils will normally transfer for the subsequent stages of their education (on completion of the stages of education provided for at the school to which the school information relates)

- the arrangements in place to support pupils with additional support needs in making successful transitions in line with the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, including the arrangements for meetings and records completed prior to transition for children with or requiring co-ordinated support plans.

3.8 Support for Learners

- how children's/young people's additional support needs will be identified and addressed
- the provisions made for pupils having additional support needs; whether the school is a special school or has a special class or unit; or a developmental nursery for observation
- who to contact if parents think their child needs additional support and where to get more information and advice
- ongoing support arrangements for all pupils including how pastoral care arrangements/pupil support arrangements are provided
- arrangements for contacting the key adult who has the overall picture of how a child/young person is progressing, e.g. form tutor, support for learning teacher or guidance/support teacher
- the ways in which all children/young people are supported to achieve the best outcomes through Curriculum for Excellence

3.9 School Improvement

- a summary of the school's main achievements and their impact over the last 12 months
- trends and information that give an overall picture of how the school is performing including achievements at SCQF levels and other awards, leaver destinations, and any other significant achievements over past three years
- how the school has improved standards for all pupils in relation to Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Well Being and evidence of how this has been achieved
- plans for future improvement over the next 3 years, including information on why key areas have been identified and what steps will be put in place to achieve these (including plans for staff CPD), and what measurements of success will be used
- links to where parents can get more information in relation to the school improvement plan, standards and quality report and school inspection report (if available)
- the school's plans to involve parents in future improvement of performance
- a summary of feedback from parents and learners on the school's performance and achievements
- signposting to other sources of information, including where parents can get national performance framework information which explains how Scotland is performing

3.10 School Policies and Practical Information

- a list of all school and relevant local authority policies that are available and how they can be accessed
- information on activities, groups and clubs and opportunities for learners to be involved in the life of school including sports and outdoor activities
- the opportunities for pupil representation and involvement in the Pupil Council or similar (if available)
- the arrangements for transport to the school
- the arrangements for school meals and other food and drink; eligibility for free school meals; how to apply for free school meals
- the arrangements if a child becomes ill or requires medical attention at school
- the organisation of school day; times of arrival and dismissal; arrangements for break times, school term dates; and holidays for the forthcoming session
- signposting to sources of advice and support for parents (including parenting)

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Arrangements are being made to establish a short life working group to prepare practical guidance for Angus schools in preparing revised School Handbooks. This group will include Head Teacher representatives, parents, and will draw on inputs from pupils. The revised

guidance will take full account of the proposed legislative changes outlined above and will provide schools with templates/exemplars for the preparation of handbooks, based on the new national requirements.

5. RISK

5.1 This report does not require any specific risk issues to be addressed.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from consideration of this report.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising from consideration of this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An [equalities impact assessment](#) is not required.

9. ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN AND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

9.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2011-2014:

- Individuals and families are involved in decisions which affect them
- Individuals are involved in their communities

10. CONSULTATION

10.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Finance and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Angus Council Education Service values greatly partnerships with parents and carers and strives to constantly improve related communications in the light of regular engagement and consultation exercises. The proposed changes to legislative requirements provide schools with an opportunity to refresh their approaches to sharing information with parents with a view to ensuring that all parents receive clear and up-to-date information throughout their child's learning journey.

**NEIL LOGUE
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

ED/NL/SRD