

Directors of Education  
By emailCC - Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and  
Behaviour in Schools

17 June 2025

Dear Colleagues,

**RELATIONSHIPS AND BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOLS**

We are writing to provide an update on support for teachers and school staff on relationships and behaviour in schools.

We are very mindful of the wider societal contexts which affect children and young people's relationships and behaviours, and participated in the summit on youth violence last week. In this meeting, experts were clear, that ensuring safety, wellbeing and community cohesion is the responsibility of the whole of society. As we are constantly reminded, relationships are key to positive learning environments. It is necessary to understand the reasons children and young people present in the way they do, and to ensure that appropriate support is put in place to support safe, respectful educational environments for all.

The [Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research \(BISSR\)](#) showed that the majority of staff in 2023 perceived that all or most pupils are generally well-behaved around the school and in the classroom. However, to support our education workforce, a range of materials have been developed with partners who have experience in responding to concerns in this area. The latest of these publications are set out below, to help support school-based policies and staff accordingly.

**We would be grateful if you could ensure this information is shared widely with all your schools, headteachers and school leaders.**

## Relationships and behaviour in schools

As part of our continued delivery of the Joint National Action Plan on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools, today new national guidance has been published on:

- [“Fostering a Positive, Inclusive and Safe School Environment guidance”](#).
- ["Guidance on risk assessments for violent, aggressive and dangerous behaviour"](#)

### Fostering a Positive, Inclusive and Safe School Environment guidance

The need for greater clarity around the use of consequences in schools was clearly identified through the [Behaviour in Scottish Schools Research \(BISSR\)](#), our national relationships and behaviour summits, and wider engagement with staff and education stakeholders. In response to these findings, the national action plan on relationships and behaviour in schools included a specific action to develop [new guidance on consequences](#). This guidance has been developed by a subgroup of Scottish Advisory Group on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools (SAGRABIS) and headteachers from the Headteachers Taskforce.

The guidance aims to support education authorities and schools to embed clear, consistent and child-centred approaches to that are responsive to difficult situations as part of their wider relationships and behaviour policies.

Alongside this new publication, it may be useful to remind school colleagues of the guidance [“Included, engaged and involved part 2”](#) which sets out the national approach to the management of school exclusion, recognising its use as a measure of last resort.

### Guidance on risk assessments for violent, aggressive and dangerous behaviour

We recognise that a minority of children display certain behaviour in schools can put them, their peers or school staff at risk. Therefore the national action plan committed to developing [new guidance on risk assessments for violent, aggressive and dangerous behaviour](#). This guidance was developed by Education Scotland’s National Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs Network and a sub-group of SAGRABIS. Social Work Scotland and Directors of Education were also consulted on this directly given the importance of consistent responses to children across sectors.

The guidance links legislative health and safety risk assessment with the wider risk assessment associated with supporting children who behave in a way that is violent, aggressive, or dangerous. The guidance provides information on processes for both preventing and responding to violent, aggressive, and dangerous behaviour; professional learning to support understanding of the factors underlying certain behaviours including aggression or violence; and teaching and learning resources to support children to develop social and emotional competencies and skills including self-regulation

Risk assessment processes should always be considered in the context of the wider assessment of a child’s needs, support planning processes, and staged intervention.

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## Supporting implementation of the guidance

To assist local authorities and schools to implement the new guidance, an initial package of support has been put in place. This includes:

- A comprehensive package of professional learning, delivered by Education Scotland, between August and December 2025, across its 'Keeping Trauma in Mind' and 'Relationships Matter' series of professional learning. Teachers and school staff may particularly wish to note sessions relating to the **new guidance on 27 August** (fostering a positive, inclusive and safe school environment) and **3 September** (risk assessments for violent, aggressive and dangerous behaviour). Staff will be able to sign up via Eventbrite in due course.
- Practical guidance for schools on developing relationships and behaviour policies, including operational guidance for school staff. Available at: [Guidance for developing a local relationships and behaviour policy](#)
- Case studies on approaches to promoting relationships and behaviour in schools, developed by headteachers, will be available on Education Scotland's website in the new school term.

## **Addressing Racism and Racist Incidents in Schools interim guidance**

Interim guidance on ["Addressing Racism and Racist Incidents in Schools"](#) has also been published.

The interim guidance has been developed in partnership with the Racism and Racist Incidents workstream of the Anti-Racism in Education Programme. This interim guidance focuses on addressing racist behaviour experienced by or displayed by pupils, providing information on what constitutes a racist incident, how to differentiate it from bullying, supporting affected children, and responding to those who display racist behaviour. It also includes guidance on recording and monitoring racist incidents and example scenarios. The interim guidance is the first stage in the development of a wider Whole School Approach to preventing and responding to racism and racist incidents in schools, which will be published in early 2026.

## **Support to improve attendance and reduce absence**

Finally, further to the information set out in a previous letter, we have published a [new factsheet](#) that provides a [quick reference guide for school staff on national attendance policy](#). This reflects the current national guidance in [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1](#) and provides signposting to further information. The national guidance is currently being refreshed and updated guidance will be published by March 2026.

The Scottish Government will also shortly publish updated information on Parent Club about school attendance and include further signposting to additional resources and sources of support for parents and carers. As part of Programme for Government 2025/26 we have also committed to launching a national campaign on attendance in autumn of 2025, to support improved attendance at school. I will share more information on this campaign in due course.

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## Conclusion

We would encourage you to engage with your teaching and school-based staff, parents and carers, and children and young people to review and, where necessary, update local relationships and behaviour policies during the new academic year. To that end, we would be grateful if you could ensure this information is shared widely with your headteachers, school leaders and wider school communities so that consideration can be given to the guidance. We would also be grateful if you could encourage school staff to take up the professional learning offer from Education Scotland.

We want children, young people and the workforce to feel safe, respected and to have a true sense of belonging. Young people are the experts in their own lives, and play a vital role in positive societal change, and we'd therefore encourage engagement with them in any guidance and policy updates.

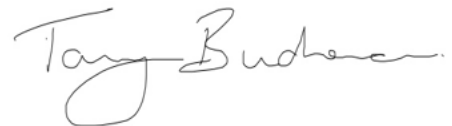
We recognise there are a number of pieces of new guidance that have been produced over recent months. Annex A includes a diagram demonstrating how this guidance sits together within the overarching policy on promoting positive relationships and behaviour in schools.

Thank you for your continued leadership in supporting positive relationships and behaviour in our schools and wider communities.  
With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely



**Jenny Gilruth MSP**



**Councillor Tony Buchanan**

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