

Building Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour – **A Training Programme for Support Staff**

Background to the development of the pack and purpose of the programme

Support staff provide a valuable contribution to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people and often work with the most vulnerable. In 2008, in response to the national discipline survey Behaviour in Scottish Schools 2006, Building Positive Relationships – a Training Programme for Support Staff was developed and published by the Scottish Government's Positive Behaviour Team.

Further surveys in 2009 and 2012 built on the original research. Following publication of the Behaviour in Scottish Schools 2012 research, new policy guidance, better relationships, better learning, better behaviour was published in 2013. Although the research reported generally changes in a positive direction in relation to behaviour, support staff had significantly more negative perceptions and experiences than headteachers and teachers. This was particularly evident in relation to low level disruptive behaviour.

Within the new guidance, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Advisory Group on Behaviour in Scottish Schools (SAGBIS) identified next steps and priority actions to support local authorities, establishments, practitioners and partners to further improve relationships and behaviour within their learning communities. Actions relating to the important role of support staff are:

- Support staff should be fully included in the school's strategic approach to promoting positive behaviour and relationships, including access to staff training.
- The training pack for support staff will be updated to take account of current policy and to provide advice on effective use of support staff as part of the class team.

The 2008 training programme, Building Positive Relationships has been updated and renamed in response to the action points in the guidance. This resource, Building better relationships, better learning, better behaviour takes into account the two key policy drivers supporting the development and promotion of positive relationships in establishments – Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). All establishments are expected to have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure a consistent approach to improving relationships and behaviour across the whole community and which consider children's rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Local authorities, headteachers and senior managers are encouraged to organise opportunities for their support staff to participate in training which extends their knowledge and skills, thus effecting change within their current practice through the development of positive relationships.

Purpose

The purpose of the programme is to provide local authorities with a resource for training support staff working within schools and educational establishments. This resource specifically focuses on relationships and behaviour and is provided to aid with the professional learning of support staff to increase their awareness of factors affecting behaviour and how to build and maintain positive relationships with children and young people. It provides a coherent and engaging model, but it is assumed that establishments will develop the resource to fully meet the specific needs of the children and young people in their care.

Aim

The aim of the programme is to provide a training opportunity within the establishment/authority CPD framework that allows and helps support staff to:

- reflect on practice;
- be more effective practitioners by redefining skills;
- focus on further developing qualities and capabilities;
- further develop knowledge and understanding; and
- become equipped with effective practical strategies to support the delivery of everyday duties.

Overview and delivery of the programme

The programme has been developed by Education Scotland's Rights, Support and Wellbeing Team for local authority trainers to deliver to school support staff.

As with any CPD activity, this resource focuses on developing qualities and capabilities of support staff.

The resource is intended for use with all support staff in schools and educational establishments. This could include pupil support assistants, ASL auxiliaries, classroom assistants, office staff, support assistants and catering assistants. The programme can also be accessed for training purposes within a multi-agency context.

The training programme will have the most significant impact upon practice in schools and establishments when delivered fully as a two-day programme. This helps underline the importance of whole school approaches and enables the assimilation of effective skills and strategies. Indeed, feedback from stakeholders has suggested that incorporating opportunities for joint training with teaching staff within the programme could help to develop shared understanding of whole school strategies and role expectations as well as enhancing communication between teachers and support staff. However, where circumstances prevail that make this problematic, colleagues organising the training delivery have scope to make plans which best fit local needs, capacity and context. For example, six twilight sessions of between 1hr 15 minutes and 1hr 35 minutes.

The materials are available on the Education Scotland website www.educationscotland.gov.uk

Acknowledgements

The training programme has been developed by the Rights, Support and Wellbeing Team in consultation with council officers and school staff from Scottish local authorities, Psychological Services and representatives from national and third sector organisations. Support Staff from several establishments and local authorities participated in the trial run of the programme and further adjustments were made to the resource following their helpful comments and feedback.

Format

The training programme contains the following elements:

- Sample outline programme.
- Trainer's notes with advice on layout for the room and suggested timings.
- PowerPoint presentation slides.
- A resources pack.
- Participants Handbook.
- Sources of additional information – references and websites; background information on brain development; video transcripts.

The training programmes are only suggested formats and trainers are free to customise and develop the materials, activities, and PowerPoint slides as they feel appropriate for their audience. Authority or school logos can be put on any of the materials.