

## West Dunbartonshire Council

### Report by the Director of Education and Cultural Services

Children's Services Committee: 18 April 2007

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**Subject: Exclusion Statistics for the School Session 2005/2006**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide information to Members of the Children's Services Committee on the exclusion statistics for West Dunbartonshire schools during the session 2005/2006, and the factors related to pupil exclusion. There will be an accompanying presentation at the committee meeting.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** Local authorities are required to collect statistics from schools on exclusions of pupils on an annual basis, and since 1998 the Scottish Executive has collected and collated a range of information on exclusions.
- 2.2** The survey information is collected under a range of headings and published by the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) in February of each year, referring to the statistics for the previous full school session. The information is made public as a series of comparative measures of how local authorities are performing in terms of pupil exclusions. SEED however acknowledges that the quality of information from local authorities is not consistent, and the criteria applied in terms of what constitutes a formal exclusion from school varies from authority to authority. The information therefore represents only a limited picture of the situation across in Scotland. Members wishing to access the full statistical report can obtain this from the Scottish Executive website, [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)
- 2.3** The headline figures published by SEED and used in press reports focus on the number of exclusions. The national priority however focuses on the length of time lost through exclusion which is recorded as the number of half days lost per 1000 pupils. This allows for comparison across schools of different sizes and is a more meaningful measure of the impact of exclusion on pupils' educational experience. The information presented in this report is in relation to time lost through exclusion.

### 3. Main Issues

- 3.1** In 2005/06 in West Dunbartonshire primary schools, there were 73 half-days lost per 1000 pupils due to exclusion. This is below the national average of 89 half days and places West Dunbartonshire as the 15<sup>th</sup> highest excluding authority.
- 3.2** In secondary schools, there were 996 half days lost per 1000 pupils which is above the rational average of 782. This means that West Dunbartonshire had the 7th highest number of half days lost in Scotland.
- 3.3** In special schools, there were 582 half days lost per 1000 pupils. This is significantly below the national average of 1318 half days lost per 1000 pupils. This means that West Dunbartonshire had the 10<sup>th</sup> highest number of half days lost in Scotland (not all authorities report on special schools).

#### 3.4 Table 1: Number of ½ days lost per 1000 pupils – All Sectors

No of half days lost per 1000 pupils - Session 2005/06			Number of Individual Pupils Excluded (WDC)
	Scottish Average*	WDC	
<b>Secondary Schools</b>	782	996	568
<b>Special Schools</b>	1318	582	14
<b>Primary Schools</b>	89	73	70
<b>All Sectors</b>	408	499	652

\* calculated from local authority figures in the SEED publications "Pupils in Scotland, 2005" (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/02/28083932/0>) (Tables 6.2, 7.2 and 8.2) and "Exclusions From Schools, 2005/06" (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/01/30100624/0>) (Table 22). Does not include figures from Grant Aided Schools.

**Table 2: Number of ½ days lost per 1000 pupils - Primary**

<b>No of half days lost per 1000 primary pupils - Session 2005/06</b>	
<b>Aitkenbar Primary</b>	57
<b>Bonhill Primary</b>	10
<b>Braehead Primary</b>	42
<b>Carleith Primary</b>	42
<b>Christie Park Primary</b>	0
<b>Clydemuir Primary</b>	37
<b>Dalreoch Primary</b>	0
<b>Edinbarnet Primary</b>	264
<b>Gartocharn Primary</b>	0
<b>Gavinburn Primary</b>	62
<b>Goldenhill Primary</b>	47
<b>Haldane Primary</b>	331
<b>Highdykes Primary</b>	0
<b>Jamestown Primary</b>	0
<b>Kilbowie Primary</b>	242
<b>Knoxland Primary</b>	17
<b>Ladyton Primary</b>	61
<b>Levenvale Primary</b>	65
<b>Linnvale Primary</b>	277
<b>Our Holy Redeemer Primary</b>	171
<b>Our Lady Of Loretto Primary</b>	35
<b>Renton Primary</b>	0
<b>St Eunan's Primary</b>	194
<b>St Joseph's Primary</b>	127
<b>St Kessog's Primary</b>	0
<b>St Martin's Primary</b>	0
<b>St Mary's Primary - Alexandria</b>	22
<b>St Mary's Primary - Clydebank</b>	0
<b>St Michael's Primary</b>	0
<b>St Patrick's Primary</b>	0
<b>St Peter's Primary</b>	0
<b>St Ronan's Primary</b>	0
<b>St Stephen's Primary</b>	9
<b>Whitecrook Primary</b>	30
<b>All Primary Schools</b>	73

**Table 2(b) Number of individual pupils excluded - Primary**

(The information is shown in this form due to the small numbers. Pupils might be identifiable if numbers are attributed to named schools)

<b>Number of Pupils</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>
0	13
1	8
2	5
3	2
4	1
5	2
7	1
9	1
16	1

**Table 3: Number of ½ days lost per 1000 pupils – Secondary**

<b>No of half days lost per 1000 Secondary pupils - Session 2005/06</b>		<b>Number of Individual Pupils Excluded</b>
<b>Braidfield High School</b>	1613	44
<b>Clydebank High School</b>	1220	129
<b><i>Braidfield / Clydebank Combined</i></b>	<i>1318</i>	<i>173</i>
<b>Dumbarton Academy</b>	517	46
<b>Our Lady &amp; St Patrick's High</b>	717	108
<b>St Andrew's High School C'bank</b>	193	27
<b>St Columba's High School C'bank</b>	1846	81
<b>Vale Of Leven Academy</b>	1309	133
<b>All Secondary Schools</b>	996	568

**Table 4: Number of ½ days lost per 1000 pupils - Special**

<b>No of half days lost per 1000 Special School pupils - Session 2005/06</b>		<b>Number of Individual Pupils Excluded</b>
<b>Kilpatrick School</b>	327	4
<b>Cunard School</b>	1846	3
<b>The Choices Programme</b>	1400	7
<b>All Special Schools</b>	582	14

- 3.5** As the tables above show, in spite of high levels of deprivation within the Council area, staff in the primary and special school sectors continue to have some success in managing pupil behaviour to limit time lost through exclusion. Where exclusion levels in a particular school are high this is often due to a small number of children with complex needs. These pupils will be known to the authority support services and most will be subject to multi-agency assessment and intervention.
- 3.6** Within the secondary sector our schools face considerable challenge to promote positive behaviour and raise attainment and achievement for all pupils, while safely managing the extreme behaviour of a relatively small number of pupils. As in the primary sector these pupils often have significant additional support needs arising from family circumstances and/or social and emotional difficulties. While schools have a commitment to supporting pupils with additional support needs, Head Teachers have to balance the needs of the individual with the needs of the wider school community. Increasingly issues related to territorial or gang difficulties, and the abuse of alcohol and drugs within the community have an adverse impact on order and discipline in schools. Given the level of deprivation in West Dunbartonshire, our secondary schools figures are better than might be expected.
- 3.7** It should be noted that while the aim is to provide for all young people via an inclusive approach, West Dunbartonshire also has a significant number of children and young people removed from mainstream school and placed in independent day and residential placements as a result of social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- 3.8** Tables 5 and 6 below give an indication of the reasons which give rise to exclusion. The picture in West Dunbartonshire mirrors the Scottish picture, with the category of general or persistent disobedience being the most frequent reason for exclusion in the secondary sector. However verbal and physical assaults on other pupils or staff also feature significantly.

**Table 5: Reasons for Exclusion in Primary Schools**

<b>West Dunbartonshire Primary School Exclusion Circumstances - Session 2005/06</b>			
<b>Reason for Exclusion</b>	<b>No of Exclusions</b>	<b>Number of half days lost</b>	<b>Average length of exclusion (half days)</b>
<b>Aggressive or threatening behaviour</b>	1	2	2.0
<b>Damage to school property</b>	1	10	10.0
<b>Fighting</b>	8	24	3.0
<b>General or persistent disobedience</b>	14	63	4.5
<b>Insolent or offensive behaviour</b>	7	38	5.4
<b>Offensive weapon</b>	1	2	2.0
<b>Other</b>	1	3	3.0
<b>Physical abuse of fellow pupils</b>	5	19	3.8
<b>Physical abuse of members of staff</b>	9	42	4.7
<b>Physical assault with improvised weapon</b>	5	20	4.0
<b>Physical assault with no weapon</b>	23	91	4.0
<b>Theft</b>	1	2	2.0
<b>Threat of physical violence using weapon or improvised weapon</b>	2	8	4.0
<b>Threat of physical violence, no weapon</b>	5	29	5.8
<b>Threat to school property</b>	1	9	9.0
<b>Verbal abuse of fellow pupils</b>	3	14	4.7
<b>Verbal abuse of members of staff</b>	40	157	3.9
<b>All Circumstances</b>	127	533	4.2

**Table 6: Reasons for Exclusion in Secondary Schools**

<b>West Dunbartonshire Secondary School Exclusion Circumstances - Session 2005/06</b>			
<b>Reason for Exclusion</b>	<b>No of Exclusions</b>	<b>Number of half days lost</b>	<b>Average length of exclusion (half days)</b>
<b>Aggressive or threatening behaviour</b>	1	4	4.0
<b>Bullying</b>	4	16	4.0
<b>Damage to personal property</b>	3	28	9.3
<b>Damage to school property</b>	18	70	3.9
<b>Disruptive behaviour</b>	1	4	4.0
<b>Fighting</b>	122	571	4.7
<b>Fire raising</b>	3	50	16.7
<b>General or persistent disobedience</b>	454	1721	3.8
<b>Insolent or offensive behaviour</b>	189	743	3.9
<b>Offensive weapon</b>	1	6	6.0
<b>Other</b>	128	792	6.2
<b>Physical abuse of fellow pupils</b>	16	95	5.9
<b>Physical abuse of members of staff</b>	4	20	5.0
<b>Physical assault with improvised weapon</b>	8	45	5.6
<b>Physical assault with no weapon</b>	74	357	4.8
<b>Physical assault with weapon</b>	7	114	16.3
<b>Refusal to attend class</b>	19	81	4.3
<b>Sexual innuendo</b>	1	6	6.0
<b>Slander and libel (incl. website)</b>	1	2	2.0
<b>Spitting</b>	1	10	10.0
<b>Substance misuse - alcohol</b>	14	29	2.1
<b>Substance misuse - not alcohol</b>	5	29	5.8
<b>Theft</b>	7	22	3.1
<b>Threat of physical violence using weapon or improvised weapon</b>	7	34	4.9
<b>Threat of physical violence, no weapon</b>	17	74	4.4
<b>Threat to personal property</b>	1	4	4.0
<b>Threat to school property</b>	3	12	4.0
<b>Vandalism</b>	2	8	4.0
<b>Verbal abuse of fellow pupils</b>	22	124	5.6
<b>Verbal abuse of members of staff</b>	249	1160	4.7
<b>All Circumstances</b>	1382	6231	4.5

<b>West Dunbartonshire Special School Exclusion Circumstances - Session 2005/06</b>			
<b>Reason for Exclusion</b>	<b>No of Exclusions</b>	<b>Number of half days lost</b>	<b>Average length of exclusion (half days)</b>
<b>Bullying</b>	1	10	10.0
<b>Damage to school property</b>	2	6	3.0
<b>General or persistent disobedience</b>	3	14	4.7
<b>Insolent or offensive behaviour</b>	1	3	3.0
<b>Physical abuse of fellow pupils</b>	2	3	1.5
<b>Physical abuse of members of staff</b>	1	4	4.0
<b>Physical assault with improvised weapon</b>	1	4	4.0
<b>Physical assault with no weapon</b>	3	14	4.7
<b>Substance misuse - not alcohol</b>	3	12	4.0
<b>Theft</b>	1	7	7.0
<b>Threat of physical violence using weapon or improvised weapon</b>	1	4	4.0
<b>Verbal abuse of members of staff</b>	1	4	4.0
<b>All Circumstances</b>	20	85	4.3

**3.9** Although the Scottish Executive no longer requires local authorities to set specific targets for schools in terms of exclusion, within this authority the monitoring of exclusions from school continues to have a high priority. There are regular discussions between the Head of Service, Inclusion Officer and Head Teachers, particularly in the secondary sector, regarding pupil discipline and pupil management issues, including exclusion. Exclusions are viewed as one aspect of the wider school discipline and pupil support framework and all schools employ a range of alternative to exclusion strategies. All school clusters, through their enhanced Pupil & Family Support teams, are moving forward to develop more intensive pupil support facilities and make effective use of the range of provision available to support vulnerable children and families through partnership with a range of agencies.

**3.10** Last session a range of strategies under the Better Behaviour - Better Learning implementation framework were piloted in West Dunbartonshire schools. These include:

- Solution Oriented School- St. Andrew's High School cluster
- Restorative practices - St. Columba's High School cluster
- Nurturing principles/  
Nurture groups - St. Michael's Primary School  
Edinbarnet Primary School  
Haldane Primary School  
St. Martin's Primary School

These initiatives are currently being evaluated and where appropriate extended to include other schools.

#### **4. Personnel Issues**

**4.1** It should be noted that a number of the posts deployed at school level to support vulnerable children and families, involve staff on temporary contracts supported by temporary grant funding from the Scottish Executive. This can lead to difficulties in terms of recruitment and retention of staff.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

**5.1** There continues to be significant financial investment in school-based pupil support measures as well as alternative provision for children and young people with additional support needs. Many of the strategies depend for success on very favourable pupil adult ratios which require generous and flexible financial support.

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

**6.1** As identified in 4.1 and 5.1 above much of the support in schools and the wider community for vulnerable children and young people is dependant on short-term funding from the Scottish Executive. It has been identified that if this level of funding is not maintained beyond March 2008, there will be a risk to some of the services currently available within school clusters. The local authority has a legislative duty to meet the needs of individual young people and provide for their educational needs through a range of alternative to exclusion programmes. While it is unlikely that all additional funding resources will be removed following March 2008 there is a moderate risk that provision may require to be cut to some extent. Consideration is currently being given to options for re-profiling the mainstream budget to address this issue.

**6.2** When making a decision about the exclusion of a pupil, Head Teachers are required to employ a risk assessment to determine whether exclusion is justified and appropriate.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1** While it is recognised that for some young people exclusions will continue to be an appropriate sanction, all head teachers recognise that with the development of appropriate support mechanisms within schools, the number of pupils requiring this ultimate sanction should be reduced.
- 7.2** Decisions regarding the exclusion of pupils continue to be appropriately made at head teacher level taking account of the needs of individual pupils and all other relevant factors. There is much good practice across the authority and considerable commitment amongst staff to continue to work with pupils who can be extremely challenging. The authority remains committed to working with schools and other agencies to build upon this good practice and deliver an inclusive service which maximises the potential for all our young people within a safe and happy school environment.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1** Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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### **Background Papers:**

**Wards Affected:** All Wards