

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE22 April 2021Report by Director of EducationEDUCATION DEPARTMENT REPORT ON GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD IN
EAST RENFREWSHIRE**PURPOSE**

1. To inform elected members on how Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is embedded within East Renfrewshire schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Elected members are asked to note and comment on the contents of the Education Department report on Getting it Right for Every Child in East Renfrewshire.

BACKGROUND

3. The Scottish Government's Getting it Right for Every Child is the [National Policy Framework](#) in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of our children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. The Education Department is fully committed to GIRFEC and staff endeavour to support and continually improve wellbeing outcomes for all our children.

4. The GIRFEC approach assists in addressing issues of poverty experienced by families and the poverty related attainment gap. It also promotes partnership working to ensure greater equality for children and young people within our settings and schools and as such supports the wider equality agenda.

5. Almost all children and young people get the support and help they need from parent(s), wider family and local community in partnership with universal services like health and education. When extra support is needed the GIRFEC approach aims to make it easy to access that support seamlessly, keeping the child at the centre of all planning and actions. It places emphasis on the importance that support required for children and young people's wellbeing, health and development is co-ordinated across all services through the highest quality of partnership working.

6. For all practitioners in our establishments, GIRFEC provides a common language to describe a child's wellbeing, and supports practice to ensure action can be taken as early as possible to improve outcomes for a child. In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), we place children's and young people's needs first, ensuring that they are listened to and understand decisions which affect them.

7. GIRFEC starts with the universal services of health and education available to all and focusses on early intervention, support and advice and building support around children and their families.

8. GIRFEC is underpinned by the following principles:

- Child focused with children and their families at the centre of decision making with support available to them
- Centred around the wellbeing of children and young people within their communities
- Based on identifying and addressing needs (including developmental needs) early to ensure the right support is implemented and later difficulties avoided
- Focused on joined-up working with services working in a coordinated way alongside families to meet needs and improve wellbeing
- Focused on intervention approaches based on clearly planned outcomes.

REPORT

EARLY YEARS ESTABLISHMENTS AND SCHOOLS

9. The GIRFEC approach has been embedded in our ELC settings and schools for a number of years. Our aim is that all our children and young people will grow and learn in environments where they are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. Through consideration of these eight wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI), consistent language is used by children, young people, staff and partners in order to work collaboratively to ensure the collective assessment of needs, risks and strengths pertaining to a child, leading to joint decision-making and planning.

10. Education settings have a crucial role in securing the best possible outcomes for children and young people who have additional support needs. Staff promote the interest of identified children and young people in line with the guidelines provided through the East Renfrewshire GIRFEC framework. The GIRFEC approach puts the child and their needs at the centre of everything we do. In all settings and schools, children and young people's views are always central to assessment and planning. School staff assess wellbeing concerns by asking key questions and, working with families and partners, take action to coordinate any support required. Robust processes are in place to track and evaluate the progress of all children and young people.

11. We take a staged approach to wellbeing planning where school staff are supported to ensure assessment and planning takes account of the [National Practice Model](#) where the Wellbeing Indicators, Resilience Matrix and My World Triangle are used to gather information, analyse, plan and review, in order to meet the needs of the child or young person concerned. Our Educational Psychology team work closely with school staff and other partner agencies to support planning for individual children. Our GIRFEC framework is designed to involve pupils and parents throughout the process of assessment, planning and delivery of support. Parental consultations take place during each step of the way and pupils are regularly consulted with to ensure their voice is heard throughout.

12. Ongoing tracking of progress against targets outlined in Wellbeing Plans and Coordinated Support Plans takes place within individual settings. In addition the department tracks a range of areas for all pupils such as attainment, achievement, attendance, exclusion rates and leaver destinations. This tracking is analysed and reported on for all children and analysis across key equity groups undertaken.

13. The wellbeing of all children and young people is the responsibility of class teachers with the Head Teacher having overall pastoral responsibility for all pupils in their setting. Every pupil is made aware of available support and encouraged to speak to staff if they are worried about something or need advice. This pastoral support has continued during the period of

school closure with approaches such as one to one daily check-ins, time in hub and wellbeing phone calls being used to support children and young people.

14. Wellbeing of children and young people is a key measure for the success of the GIRFEC approach. The investment in a culture and ethos of nurture within our establishments remains key to meeting the wellbeing needs of all children and particularly those most vulnerable. All settings have wellbeing and nurture as a key priority within their improvement plans and most settings have used *How Nurturing is our School?* in order to further embed nurture as part of an improving schools agenda. Training in nurturing approaches is available to staff in all settings, with a significant number taking up this opportunity. All participants reported that the training helped them to meet the needs of children and young people in their context. During the period of school closure, all settings and schools continued with targeted interventions and support strategies, such as nurture groups, friendship groups, Seasons for Growth and HWB programmes such as Emotion Works, Kitbag groups and mindfulness sessions in order to continue to support and promote wellbeing. In 2019-20, no temporary exclusions were made in the primary sector and there was a decrease in exclusions in the secondary sector to 4.6 incidents per 1000 pupils, down from 6.7 in 2018-19 and the lowest exclusion rate since 2014-15.

15. In order for staff to take action to ensure that all children are supported to achieve their potential, all settings establishments place a high priority on the early identification of children and young people who require additional support. This includes identification and assessment in the early years through partnership working with Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) colleagues such as Health Visitors and implementation and analysis of Developmental Milestone Assessments.

16. Almost all our children and young people with identified additional support needs will go to school within their local community and with their peers, with appropriate support which is based on thorough collaborative assessment of their needs. Through the Education Resource Group and Early Years Intervention Group, resources are deployed as equitably as possible, ensuring that planning and provision meet the needs of individual children and young people. Throughout school closure as a result of COVID-19, Joint Support Team (JST) meetings, Consultation and Review meetings and Inter Agency Planning (Core) Groups have continued to meet, with wellbeing plans being adapted to address needs which have arisen during lockdown

17. The effective transitions that are in place in all our establishments, are vital in meeting the needs of children and young people. There are clear plans in all our establishments to support the transitions of a child or young person with support needs. During the period of school closure, establishments used a range of innovative and creative approaches to ensure effective transitions were still in place including virtual tours of buildings, online Meet the Teacher, Outdoor Transition Activities, in setting/school activities for children and young people, multi-agency meetings and the creation of information videos and presentations. 90% of children and young people felt they were well supported in moving to a new school in the last year and 94% of parents and carers agreed with this.

18. As part of our ongoing self-evaluation, our authority questionnaires identified that almost all children and young people agreed that they have someone they can speak to if they are upset or worried and almost all children and young people agreed that they feel safe in school.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

19. There is excellent partnership working within East Renfrewshire.

20. The Children and Young People's Plan for 2020-2023 places GIRFEC approaches and children's rights at the heart of its vision: *'We want East Renfrewshire's children to grow up loved, respected and given every opportunity to fulfil their potential. We want them to be safe, equal and healthy, have someone to trust, have friends, but most of all HOPE'*.

21. At the heart of the Integrated Children's Services Early Years Sub Group is an approach which recognises the right of all young children to high quality relationships, environments and services and this has been enhanced through developments such as Promoting and Nurturing Early Communication and Language (PANECAL), delivering effective parenting support that helps families such as Family First, Positive Parenting Programme and Solihull Approaches and a focus on family wellbeing.

22. All schools have access to our Healthier Minds Service, where children and young people in school are offered more timely and appropriate support for their mental and emotional wellbeing in order to ensure the right support is given at the right time. This ensures effective partnership working and timely response to meet the needs of vulnerable children. The multidisciplinary team includes personnel from CAMHS, Children's 1st, Educational Psychology, Social Work, RAMH and School Nursing. Since the launch of the hub in November 2020, there have been 116 referrals, with the most common reason for referral being anxiety/stress. Key work of the team includes:

- Provide 1 to 1 and group work support that is needs led
- Facilitate the establishment of peer support networks
- Support and build capacity within schools.

23. The Promise (2020) highlights that *'The workforce needs support, time and care to develop and maintain relationships. Scotland must hold the hands of those who hold the hands of the child.'* There has been significant success in aligning partnership working to the principles of The Promise including the Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Pilot, work of the Champions Board, Signs of Safety approaches and implementation of a high quality development programme for all partners. The partnership with Children 1st to support care experienced children and young people within Barrhead has resulted in a total of 16 children and young people receiving individual support and a further 27 children through group participation support.

24. Children 1st's Family Wellbeing Service has worked collaboratively with Education and HSCP to successfully support a number of children and young people and their families in East Renfrewshire Council. A few schools have utilised a proportion of their Pupil Equity Funding allocation to employ a Children 1st Wellbeing Worker. This has resulted in improved emotional health and wellbeing for children and young people and their families. Key outcomes have included:

- 100% of families reported improved relationships with family and/or significant adults *"I used to be angry, with all the pressure in my head, I am now calmer dealing with my grandson"*
- 100% of families reported improved engagement with school and learning
- 100% of families reported Increased connection to positive activities within the community
- Schools have increased capacity to support the needs of children and young people with additional support being offered to over 100 staff.

25. Children 1st Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) service has supported families in East Renfrewshire without statutory involvement, as a preventative early intervention that

gives families the power to make decisions. FGDM strengthens communities by enabling families to utilise their wider network to help keep their children safe and at home. A key area of focus has been school attendance. The overall attendance rate for all primary schools in 2019- 20 was 95.5% and 93% for secondary schools.

'Despite the school being in lockdown the pupils themselves have asked to attend the HUB as they seek the stability of school and a safe place to work. Some of these young people had very poor attendance previously so it's encouraging to see them wanting to come into school.'
Teacher

26. There is a strong collaborative approach to the protection and safeguarding of children across all departments within the Council. Education staff are represented in the Council's Child Protection Committee. Early learning and childcare and school staff receive regular updates and training via Child Protection Co-ordinator meetings and there is education practitioner involvement in Initial Referral Discussions (IRD) with health, social work and police.

CAREER LONG PROFESSIONAL LEARNING (CLPL)

27. A departmental comprehensive Career Long Professional Learning Programme is in place to build the capacity of staff and complement existing in-school training programmes. Training programmes are provided to ensure staff can identify, assess and record a wellbeing concern, and prepare a single or multi-agency plan to meet identified needs, thus ensuring they are getting it right for every child.

28. Our Educational Psychology Service provide a comprehensive professional learning programme which embraces different approaches to learning and builds capacity through courses, professional reading, school improvement partnerships, implementation science and ongoing professional dialogue forums.

29. Regular Additional Support Needs Co-ordinator, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Advisor and Dyslexia forums ensure that our ELC settings and schools are equipped with current research and knowledge in order to meet the needs of children and young people.

30. At GIRFEC and Corporate Parenting Forums held during school session 2019-20, best practice was shared with senior staff from all settings on Children's Hearings, engagement with the HSCP Request for Assistance Team, and the 'For Your Entertainment' scheme.

31. East Renfrewshire's Child Protection Committee (CPC) is committed to delivering a high quality development programme which provides staff with the opportunity to keep up to date with legislation, research and best practice and to offer people from different agencies the chance to reflect and learn together within this important area of work.

32. Almost all establishments have participated in Signs of Safety professional learning in order to ensure education staff are able to support this person centred, strengths based approach to Child Protection.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

33. There are no financial or efficiency implications related to this report.

CONCLUSION

34. GIRFEC continues to be the right approach to improve the wellbeing of children and young people and is embedded throughout our ELC settings and schools. When put into practice GIRFEC works and makes a positive difference for our children and young people, as evidenced throughout this report. In light of the Additional Support for Learning Review *'All Our Children and All Their Potential'*, GIRFEC is currently being refreshed and the outcome of this refresh will inform future planning and practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

35. Elected members are asked to note and comment on the contents of the Education Department report on Getting it Right for Every Child in East Renfrewshire.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
22 April 2021

Convener Contact Details

Councillor Paul O'Kane, Convener for Education and Equalities Tel: 07718 697115

Report Authors

Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity)
Tel: 0141 577 3253
Siobhan.McColgan2@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk