

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 17 February 2026. Minute of Meeting of the EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Greig, Convener; Councillor Mennie, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Allard, Blake, Boulton (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Stewart for articles 7 and 8), Brooks, Buchanan, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Fairfull, Macdonald (as substitute for Councillor Grant), MacGregor, McLeod and Mrs Stewart (for articles 1 to 6). External Members:- Ms Danielle Barclay (Parent Representative - Nursery / Primary), Mr Doug Haywood (Teacher Representative - Primary Schools), Ms Jacqueline Munro (Teacher Representative - Secondary Schools), Dr Alison Murray (Parent Representative - Secondary), Mr John Murray (Roman Catholic Religious Representative) (for articles 1 to part of article 6) and Mrs Hilda Smith (Church of Scotland representative) (for articles 6 to 8).

Also in attendance:- Councillor Boulton for article 6.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 25 November 2025 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

2. The Committee had before it the committee business planner, as prepared by the Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the reason outlined in the planner for the delay to item 12 (Children's Services Plan Annual Update); and
- (ii) to otherwise note the planner.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT/NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK PROGRESS UPDATE - CORS/26/030

3. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director - Corporate Services and the Executive Director - Families and Communities, which presented (a) the status of key quarterly performance and service standard measures (and recent

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
17 February 2026

national publications) relating to the Education and Lifelong Learning and Children's Social Work and Family Support Clusters; (b) a progress update in respect of the Council's National Improvement Framework Plan; and (c) early reflections against the national release of 2024/25 Curriculum for Excellence outcomes in December 2025.

During questions on the report, Dr Murray made a transparency statement as she had a son with additional support needs, however she did not consider that this amounted to an interest which would require her to leave the meeting for the item.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report and provide comments and observations on the information contained in the report appendices.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to agree to instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning in consultation with the Chief Officer – Data Insights to provide further information on reasons for variation in P1 literacy and numeracy performance in 2024/25 along with proposals to address the identified performance challenge, as part of the regular performance report, to the April Education and Children's Services Committee; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

INSPECTION REPORTING - F&C/26/029

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Families and Communities which detailed the outcome of inspection reports published by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) and The Care Inspectorate since the last meeting of the Committee. The report also contained an update on progress towards inspection recommendations at Northfield and Harlaw Academies.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the content of this report; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to support Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools to implement continuous improvement in keeping with agreed Quality Improvement Frameworks.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers had undertaken to provide information to Members outwith the meeting on any lessons learned from the parental engagement work undertaken at Harlaw Academy;

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
17 February 2026

- (ii) to note that officers would feed back the comments made around the figures on page 73 of the report (that 43% to 68% was an increase of 58%, rather than 25%);
- (iii) to further note the comments around consistency of the percentage figures used in the report (for example, numbers of pupils within S4 against numbers of pupils presented) and that officers would take this on board for future reports to Committee; and
- (iv) to approve the recommendations.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE CONCESSION AGREEMENTS - FLEXIBLE CHILDCARE SERVICES SCOTLAND - F&C/26/006

5. With reference to article 7 of the minute of its meeting of 24 January 2023, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Families and Communities which provided an update on the operations of the concession agreements at Cummings Park and Tillydrone Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) / Nursery settings run by Flexible Childcare Services Scotland (FCSS).

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the contents of the report and instruct officers to report back to Committee at the end of the next Concession Contract period; and
- (b) agree to extend the concession agreements with Flexible Childcare Scotland Services (FCSS) for another 4 years based on the positive evaluations and their ability to offer a choice of flexible services in areas where there were a limited number of funded providers operating.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that officers include testimonies where possible in future reports to Committee;
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

ACTION TO REDUCE INCIDENTS IN SCHOOLS - F&C/26/013

6. With reference to article 2 of the minute of the meeting of the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee of 26 August 2025, article 6 of the minute of the Education and Children's Services Committee of 25 November 2025, and the meeting of Council of 4 February 2026, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which (a) outlined the approach taken to managing incidents with offensive weapons in schools; (b) provided an analysis of both Council and Police Scotland data; (c) updated Members on learning from generic incident data held; (d) provided an overview of how the Education Service was working with partners to reduce the number of incidents in schools; and (e) shared learning from changes made at school level regarding mobile phone use.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
17 February 2026

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the refreshed Anti-Weapon / Knife Crime guidance and acknowledge that the work done by schools, central officers and partners resulted in robust multiagency responses to incidents;
- (b) note that there were strong systems in place which were informing effective preventative strategies;
- (c) note that the data showed incidents were clearly linked to developmental delays and wellbeing needs;
- (d) note that the number of incidents was in line with comparable local authorities; and
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to consider the learning from this report when updating school Lockdown Guidance.

The Committee was addressed by Councillor Boulton, in terms of Standing Order 16.1.

The Convener, seconded by the Vice Convener, moved:-

That the Committee:-

- (a) approve the recommendations in the report;
- (b) note that the impacts of a general mobile phone ban were inconclusive and instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to continue to monitor and evaluate mobile phone use in school settings;
- (c) welcome the ongoing constructive cooperation with Unions on delivering the agreed Behaviour Plan, including delivery of preventative professional learning and recognise the importance of sustaining partnership working with Unions especially in responding to survey findings that recorded the views of teachers and other staff;
- (d) note that the Behaviour Plan was linked to the report at item 10.3 on the Early Intervention Support Space - The Bridge Service, which kept children's rights at the centre of our work and contributed to the goal of inclusion in education settings, and agree that future expansion of similar models, based on lessons learned from the Bridge, should be progressed for secondary stage pupils, subject to Committee approval of the recommendations in item 10.3 (Early Intervention Support Space – The Bridge Service);
- (e) note the conclusions at Section 3.60 of the report, in particular that evidence demonstrated that many incidents being reported were a result of the young person's developmental, transition, hunger and intimate care needs and agree to instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to incorporate this information in planning and delivering action through the Behaviour Plan; and
- (f) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to seek the views of pupils on how the Behaviour Plan takes these needs into account.

Councillor Blake, seconded by Councillor Macdonald, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee:-

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
17 February 2026

- (a) note the refreshed Anti-Weapon / Knife Crime guidance and acknowledge the work done by schools, central officers and partners;
- (b) note that the report indicated that incidents were linked to developmental delays and well-being needs;
- (c) agree that no teacher, pupil or support staff member should feel unsafe in the classroom and that 65 incidents per week, even if it was in line with other local authorities, was a level of aggression and violence in our schools that should not be tolerated;
- (d) note the preventative strategies and restorative practice in place and in development. Note that the report did not mention consequences for violence and aggressive behaviour and instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to provide an update to Committee regarding current practice and any changes required as part of the review of the Exclusion Policy, due to be presented to Committee in June;
- (e) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to consider the learning from this report when updating school Lockdown Guidance;
- (f) instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to introduce a ban on mobile phone in classrooms across the city, based on the out of sight policy already trialled within some city schools;
- (g) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report to Committee annually on Action to Reduce Incidents in schools; and
- (h) note the analysis around the impact on behaviour of the September weekend and instruct the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning when the calendar was reviewed again, to include this data and consider whether the two days of the September weekend should be moved to February half term.

On a division, there voted:- for the motion (10) – the Convener; the Vice Convener; Councillors Allard, Buchanan, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Fairfull and MacGregor; Ms Barclay and Dr Murray; for the amendment (5) – Councillors Blake, Brooks, Macdonald, McLeod and Mrs Stewart; declined to vote (3) – Mr Haywood, Ms Munro and Mrs Smith; absent from the division (1) – Mr Murray.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning would review whether a question could be included in future surveys in relation to the thoughts of pupils on weapons in schools;
- (ii) to note that the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning would discuss any impact caused by smart watches with the Head Teacher group;
- (iii) to note that the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning would provide a service update to Members if the HDRC had any data available in relation to any gender differences around the use of mobile phones; and
- (iv) to adopt the motion.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
17 February 2026

EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORT SERVICE - THE BRIDGE SERVICE - F&C/26/015

7. With reference to article 11 of the minute of its meeting of 29 April 2025, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Families and Communities which provided an update on early progress in implementing an Early Intervention Service Test of Change at Riverbank School for younger primary school pupils from August 2025.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note progress made in establishing The Early Intervention Support Service, The Bridge Service, and interim learning informing next steps; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to scope a Secondary Early Intervention Support Service and present an operational model to Committee for approval before the end of the calendar year.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would circulate information to Members outwith the meeting on the Diamond 9 exercise which had been carried out;
- (ii) to approve the recommendations; and
- (iii) to instruct the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to report annually to Committee to monitor the continued progress of pupils who had returned to home school settings.

ADDITIONAL CLOSURE DAY TO MARK SCOTLAND'S PARTICIPATION IN THE MEN'S FOOTBALL WORLD CUP FINALS - F&C/26/047

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Families and Communities which sought approval for the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to apply to the Scottish Government for an additional closure day to mark Scotland's participation in the Men's football World Cup finals, subject to the decision due to be taken at a special meeting of the Staff Governance Committee to be held on 23 February 2026.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee delegate authority to the Chief Officer - Education and Lifelong Learning to make a formal request to Scottish Government for an additional closure day on 15 June 2026, subject to a decision by Staff Governance Committee of an additional public holiday for staff.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation.

- **COUNCILLOR MARTIN GREIG, Convener**

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
17 February 2026