

Inspection Advice on Relationships and Behaviour in Schools and Settings

(March 2024)

Inspection Advice Note

Responding to the publication of the Behaviour in Scotland's Schools Research on 29th November 2023, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, Jenny Gilruth announced that she had asked Education Scotland 'to strengthen the evidence HM Inspectors gather during school inspections, to ensure [the Scottish Government has] an accurate picture of behaviour in Scotland's schools to support improvement'.

In January 2024, Education Scotland issued an [Inspection Advice Note](#), explaining that HM Inspectors will continue to look at behaviour and relationships during inspections, as they have always done but from the week beginning 15 January 2024, would enhance the evidence they gather and the commentary they make about behaviour and relationships in reports.

In outlining the approach they will take to gather this evidence, they stated:

*'We want to work with you to understand the approaches to creating and maintaining positive relationships and behaviour and its impact on children and young people. **We will also want to learn from you about any challenges you are facing.**'* (emphasis added)

EIS Advice to Members

The EIS is clear that an enhanced focus on behaviour and relationships must be aimed at supporting schools tackle behaviour issues, and must not be about blaming schools and teachers, who are often working in challenging contexts with insufficient resources.

In the interests of ensuring that this process is meaningful and the evidence gathered presents 'an accurate picture' of behaviour in schools, the EIS advises members, including Headteacher and Depute Headteacher members, and those managing ELC settings, to be honest and frank in conversations with HM Inspectors about, *inter alia*:

- the challenges they face and the underlying reasons;
- the impact of violent, distressed and aggressive behaviour on children, on themselves and on colleagues;
- procedures for reporting and recording violent incidents, including debriefing and risk assessment;
- occasions on which they have been discouraged from reporting or have not received support or had the opportunity to debrief following an incident;
- the extent to which reporting and recording adds to workload; and
- the supports available for children and staff.

Teachers and other school and ELC staff should feel confident in highlighting the extent to which their school and local authority is pro-active in encouraging staff to report violent incidents and the impact which reporting has in securing action.

If the culture around managing violent incidents is to change, there must be accurate and transparent reporting, not only to ensure that staff and pupils subjected to violence receive the appropriate support but also to ensure that the extent of the problem can be appropriately tracked, to determine whether resources are sufficient and interventions impactful.

EIS Monitoring Forms

Given the enhanced focus on relationships and behaviour, we would be grateful if Reps could comment specifically on this aspect of the inspection when completing the EIS Monitoring Form.

We would request that these forms are completed and returned to the Education and Equality Department (gpaton@eis.org.uk) as soon as possible after an inspection has been concluded.

This advice should be read in conjunction with existing EIS advice for [Primary/Nursery](#), [Secondary](#) and [Special Schools](#) and with the [EIS advice on Care Inspectorate Inspections of ELC Settings](#).