

Schools' Role in Promoting Pupil Well- being - Draft Guidance for Consultation

Consultation Response Form

The closing date for this consultation is:

25 September 2008

Your comments must reach us by that date.

department for
children, schools and families

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online or offline response facility available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families e-consultation website (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations>).

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department. This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that neither this, nor an automatically-generated e-mail confidentiality statement, will necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Name Chris Goodey
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If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact Sue Holley on:

Telephone: 0207 925 5825

e-mail: susan.holley@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit on:

Telephone: 0870 000 2288

Fax: 01928 794 113

e-mail: consultation.unit@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

Please select one option that best describes you as a respondent:

<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Children's Service
<input type="checkbox"/> General Public	<input type="checkbox"/> Child or Young Person	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent
<input type="checkbox"/> Union	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Organisation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other		

Please Specify:
voluntary organisation

Questions following paragraph 4.12 - Operational engagement with other services

1 a) What is your experience of how effectively childrens services (including health) currently support and respond to schools?

Highly Effective

Effective

✓ Not Effective

Comments:

CSIE is an organisation dedicated to the furtherance of inclusion in the most general sense of the term. However, for understandable reasons (not the least of which is the structure of the DCSF, with "special educational needs" a separate subsection within it), we think that children with SEN labels are likely to be missing from these policy documents or at best treated as an add-on. Our comments throughout are therefore concerned with these children in particular, and we seek the urgent attention of officers whose place in the department's structure leads them to regard this as a specialist brief and therefore not equally their responsibility. Effective support and response to schools in the area of these children's well-being - particularly in mainstream schools - will be dependent on progress towards a more inclusive structure in the Department and the consequent changes of attitude that will then follow from all staff.

1 b) What are the key barriers to more effective collaboration between schools and other children's services?

Comments:

People within the various government departments and on downwards through local authorities and PCTs are operating within professional parameters which come with different values, traditions and ways of working. They find it difficult to step outside these in order to put young people and their families first, and to pool their skills. At a higher level, government continues to develop social, educational and health policies separately. The result is that social workers follow the Children Act, teachers the SEN legislation, and health workers the Department of Health.

1 c) What are the key enablers to more effective collaboration between schools and other children's services?

Comments:

In order to overcome the separateness described above, there needs to be strong leadership, shared vision and values, and a single plan across departments for the well-being of children (and adults) with SEN labels. These has to extend to local authority level, on a directive and not a permissive basis.

1 d) What further support do schools need in this area?

Comments:

The example needs to be set by government and local authorities, as above (1c).

1 e) Should DCSF develop national protocols setting out the roles and responsibilities of schools and other services?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments:

1 f) Should we leave this for local agreement?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments:

Questions following paragraph 4.15 - School to school collaboration and well-being.

2 a) What are the key barriers to collaboration between schools?

Comments:

2 b) What are the key enablers to collaboration between schools?

Comments:

2 c) What action would you like to see to support inter-school collaboration?

Comments:

Questions following paragraph 4.17 - Schools working with parents to promote well-being

3 What further support would be helpful to schools in developing effective partnerships with and support for fathers and mothers, including non-resident parents?

Comments:

Effective partnerships depend on mutual respect. Too many schools regard parents of children with SEN labels as a nuisance, and this of course may encourage the feeling that the children themselves are a nuisance. The sense of being discriminated against tacitly in this way is a major existing cause of stress among children and their parents and decreases the sense of well-being. School staff are providers, parents are clients, so this is not a symmetrical relationship; but school staff need to be encouraged to take seriously parental expertise about children whose characteristics the school may be relatively unfamiliar with, and to allow it to contribute to the school's own expertise.

Questions following paragraph 4.19 - The workforce and leadership of the 21st century school.

4 a) Do you agree with the outline of the core competences and range of skills which schools need to develop in order to effectively support well-being?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Children labelled with special educational needs are particularly vulnerable to isolation. There is no mention in the consultation document of the existing and proven techniques for overcoming this through the deliberate and intentional fostering of friendships, for example "Circles of Friends" and "Circles of Support". Currently a small number of schools practise this, and a very small number of local authorities have an officer with the specific responsibility to develop them. These need to be established as best practice examples. The deliberate creation of friendships and peer support has to become an Ofsted criterion. This issue is without doubt, as all colleagues on the Special Education Consortium agreed when the document was introduced to us by Noreen Graham, the biggest contributor to the well-being of children with SEN in schools.

4 b) What are the key barriers for schools in developing their workforce to match the 21st century school vision?

Comments:

Lack of knowledge of government policy on disabled adults (e.g. Our Health, Our Care, Our Say; Valuing People; Getting a Life), all of which address directly the problems which disabled adults encounter in looking for work and suggest solutions. Some explicit joining up between schools and adult services, the DWP (and DH) is needed specifically in respect of children labelled with special needs.

4 c) What are the key enablers for schools in developing their workforce to match the 21st century school vision?

Comments:

4 d) What further support would schools find useful in developing their workforce?

Comments:

Questions following paragraph 5.7 - Planning and review of school contribution to well-being.

5 What further guidance would be helpful to schools to inform their self-evaluation of their contribution to well-being?

Comments:

See 4a. Mental and physical well-being depends in the first place on being accepted by one's peers and finding one's place among them. Children with SEN labels are far more likely to be discriminated against in the wider society than any other group, and it is this discrimination and non-acceptance that is the root which must be tackled. Self-evaluation, like Ofsted reports, should have a dedicated section concerning the intentional fostering and creation of friendship groups for children with SEN labels.

6 How easy did you find it to respond to this consultation?

Easy

Difficult

Not Sure

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply ✓

Here at the Department for Children, Schools and Families we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

✓Yes No

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Website:
<http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file44364.pdf>

Phil Turner - DCSF consultation Co-Ordinator 01928 794304

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 25 September 2008

Send by post to:

Consultation Unit, Ground Floor, Area B, Castle View House, East Lane,
Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ

Email to:

promotingpupil.well-being@dcf.gov.uk