

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	27 November 2018
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Attachment Strategy for Education Resources
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide background and information on the Attachment Strategy for Education Resources.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Education Resources' Attachment Strategy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- (2) that arrangements for the dissemination of the Strategy, as outlined in paragraph 4.3 of the report be approved.
- (3) that the proposal to establish an Attachment Strategy Implementation Group as outlined in paragraph 4.4. be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Children's Service Plan adopted the action 'Embed Attachment Informed Practice' in 2014.
- 3.2. A Children's Services' Attachment Strategy Group was established in 2015, chaired by the Principal Psychologist, to explore current understandings of attachment theory in the Children's Services workforce and the level of skills in 'Attachment Informed Practice'.
- 3.3. The Attachment Strategy Group was informed by the research programme on the impact of training, coaching and mentoring in attachment theory and practice undertaken by the Principal Psychologist. This included an authority wide audit of the self-reported knowledge, skills and confidence of staff in attachment theory and practice.
- 3.4. There was an agreement reached in 2017 by the Children's Services' Attachment Strategy Group, that a key action would be engagement with staff and partners on the development of an Education Attachment Strategy as a first step, with multi-agency colleagues acting as critical friends to the process.
- 3.5. The development of the Attachment Strategy is based on evidence led research and of practical examples of how it works in practice and the difference it can make to the lives of children and young people. An example being the HEART Group based in

Glenlee Primary, Burnbank which focused on – *How Early Attachment Relationships Support Transitions*.

- 3.6. The Strategy is designed around the following questions which ask what are we doing to keep our children and young people safe and how do we support our staff to achieve this:
- *How our establishments and services can provide a secure base and safe haven for children and young people*
 - *How our establishments and services can be a secure base and safe haven for staff*
- 3.7. The Education Resources' Attachment Strategy supports the action in the Getting it Right for Every Child in South Lanarkshire's Children Services Plan 2017/2020 - "develop an attachment strategy to inform the implementation of training on attachment-informed practice". Although the focus is on Education practitioners, the Strategy has been developed in consultation with partner agencies.
- 3.8. It aims to promote the key understandings from attachment theory and how the theory can inform the ways in which we support our children and young people. This document will, therefore, promote attachment-informed practice from early years to secondary aged children and young people and will also inform training plans for the Education workforce.
- 3.9. Attachment theory supports both the understanding of early childhood trauma and the impact of loss. It also provides the theoretical underpinning needed to fully comprehend the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) dialogue.
- 3.10. Attachment-informed practice supports the Scottish Government vision of transformational change required to improve outcomes for children and young people by creating emotionally supportive learning experiences which optimize learning environments.
- 3.11. Attachment-informed practice supports local priorities and procedures, such as GIRFEC and the Scottish Government's ambition to make Scotland the best place in the world for children to grow up.
- 3.12. The Strategy promotes better experiences of attachment for South Lanarkshire's children and young people.

4. Aims of the Strategy

- 4.1. The aim of this Strategy is to discourage labelling of children or diagnosing conditions and to:-
- promote an understanding of attachment theory and practice and why having an understanding of the reasons behind a child/young person's behaviour is pivotal
 - highlight why attachment theory and practice is important for **everyone** working within Education Resources, whatever their role and remit, so that we all realise the difference we can make
 - promote an understanding of insecure attachment behaviour
 - make recommendations for awareness-raising and training on the implementation of attachment-informed practice
- 4.2. Responding to difficult behaviours from children and young people in an attachment-informed way can be emotionally challenging. The aspiration of this document is that it

will build understanding in the workforce and highlight the need for adults to support each other in this drive to improve outcomes for children and young people.

- 4.3. The rollout plan for the dissemination of the Strategy will include professional learning and awareness sessions for staff along with an e-learning programme. This will include extending the current newly Qualified Teachers' awareness raising training.
- 4.4. It is proposed to establish an Attachment Strategy Implementation Group and the development of an action plan to monitor progress and impact.

5. Attachment theory – impact and benefits

- 5.1. Attachment theory is one of the most influential theories of personality development within the context of relationships, of relevance not just to children, but to all of society.
- 5.2. 'Attachment behaviours' are evident when a child or adult is fearful/anxious/feels unsafe and these behaviours are ways of communicating unmet developmental needs, preoccupations and past experience.
- 5.3. It is important for everyone working within Education Resources to understand attachment theory and practice, whatever their role and remit – we can all make a difference.
- 5.4. Adults who understand the attachment process and the effects of unmet attachment needs and trauma are better equipped to build resilience.
- 5.5. Attachment-informed practice improves outcomes for children and young people and changes life trajectories.
- 5.6. Attachment-informed practice involves everything from our day to day interactions with children, young people and colleagues to organisational approaches such as nurturing and restorative practice.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. The implications for employees are positive opportunities to undertake Professional Learning on attachment and on the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. Costs can be met from within existing budgeting resources.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. There are no implications for sustainability or risk in terms of the information contained within this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. Inclusion and equality are at the heart of the Strategy and arrangements are in place to undertake a formal equality impact assessment.
- 9.2. Consultation and engagement with stakeholders and multi-agency partners will continue as the strategy is further developed and rolled-out to educational establishments and services.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

23 October 2018

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

- Children's Services Plan 2017-20

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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