

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 22 November 2022

BY: Executive Director – Education & Children’s Services

SUBJECT: Education: Inclusion Policy & Accessibility Strategy
2020–2023 progress update and continuation for
2023–2026

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the progress with actions agreed within the Accessibility Strategy 2020 – 2023 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 To seek approval from the Committee to extend the 2020 – 2023 action plan to cover the 2023 – 2026 period.
- 1.3 To seek approval from the Committee for minor updates to the Inclusion Policy (Appendix 2).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - i. Review and note the progress of the Accessibility Strategy Action Plan (Appendix 1) as agreed at Education Committee in February 2020.
 - ii. Consider the proposed extension of the 2020–2023 Accessibility Strategy Action Plan to cover the 2023–2026 period due to the disruption of Covid-19.
 - iii. Consider the proposed amendments to the Inclusion Policy following feedback from LGBT Youth Scotland (Appendix 2).

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 *The Education (Disabilities Strategies and Pupil’s Educational Records)(Scotland) Act 2002* places a duty on local authorities to prepare and implement an Accessibility Strategy to cover three consecutive year periods.
- 3.2 This is East Lothian’s fifth Accessibility Strategy Action Plan and is intended to become the sixth, covering the three year period from March 2023 to March 2026.

- 3.3 The local authority, schools and Early Learning and Childcare establishments must take the Accessibility Strategy into account in any management decisions and improvement planning.
- 3.4 The purpose of this Accessibility Strategy is to ensure improvements in the following areas:
- **Curriculum** - increase disabled pupils' participation in the curriculum;
 - **Physical Environment** - improve the physical environment of schools to enable better access to education and associated services provided; and
 - **Communication** -improve communication with disabled pupils. In particular, relating to the provision of information in appropriate alternative formats and taking account of any preferences expressed by them or their parents that would be provided in writing to pupils who do not have a disability.

These are referred to as *planning duties* in associated legislation.

- 3.5 Covid-19 restrictions began in March 2020 when the fifth Accessibility Strategy was due to be actioned. Due to this unprecedented disruption, we are seeking approval for an extension to the three year timeframe.
- 3.6 Ongoing collaboration between the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service and LGBT Youth Scotland has been established, and this includes regular review of all of the policies within our Included, Engaged and Involved suite. Following recent feedback, an amendment was made to the Equality section on p.4 to reference intersectionality; and relevant national guidance was added to Appendix 1.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All current and future policies at authority and school level will take account of the duties set down by this Accessibility Strategy, the Equality Act 2010, the Education Disability Strategies and Pupils Educational Records (Scotland) Act 2002, the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (amended 2009; 2017) and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - Current legislation and policy on Equalities and Accessibility requires the authority to make reasonable adjustments where required to provide access for pupils to the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, built environment and communication. These adjustments will continue to be met from the Education budget.
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None

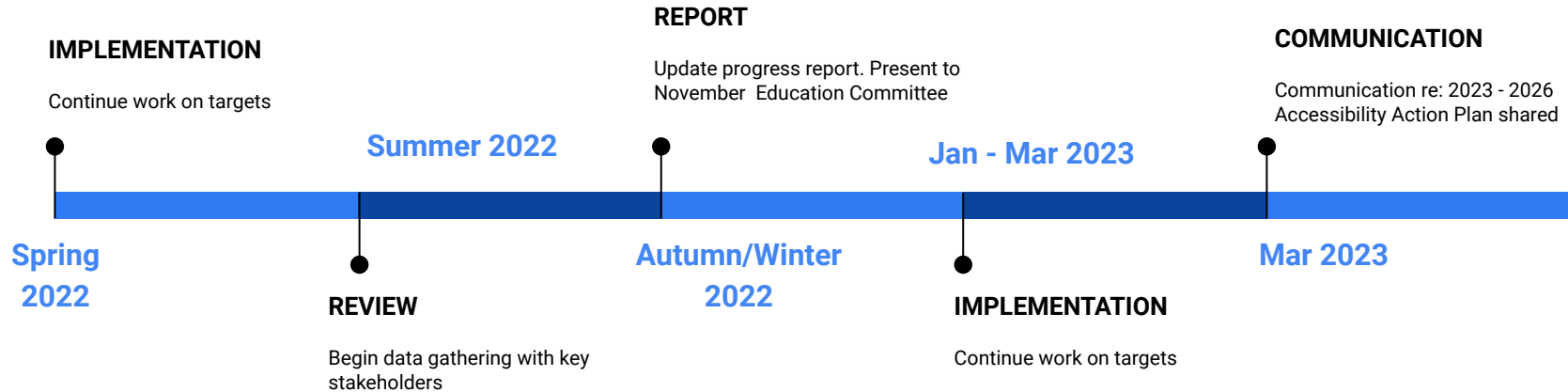
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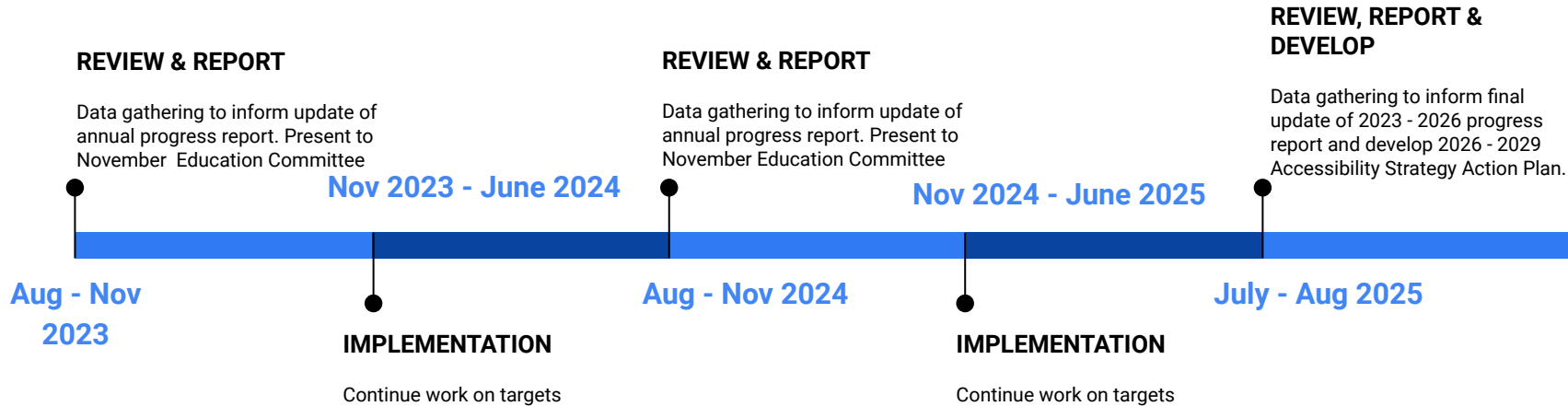
Accessibility Strategy: **Action Plan**

2020 - 2023
(Proposed 2023 - 2026)

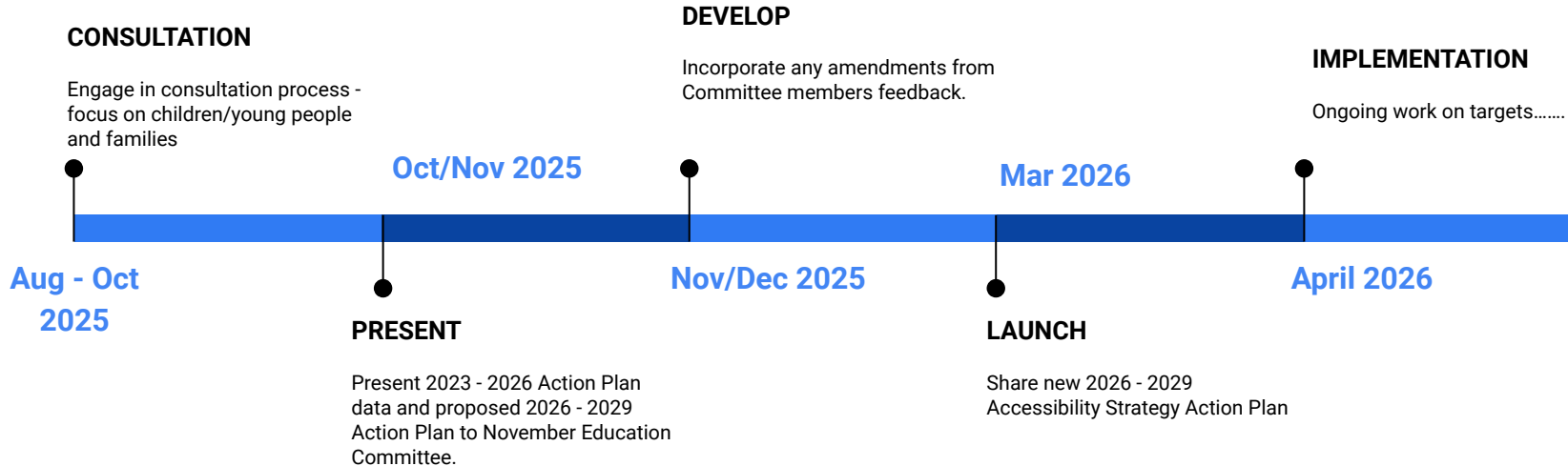
Monitoring Timeline



Monitoring Timeline



Monitoring Timeline



1. Use a Range of Relevant Data to Identify Priorities and Inform Next Steps

1.1 Re-establish steering group membership including children/young people and family representation.

1.2 Establish annual monitoring and progress reporting timeline.

1.3 Identify required data for monitoring of all current action plan points.

Action Point	Progress	Timescale Update
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Main steering group model proved problematic with remote working● Smaller, less formal workstreams established● Need to be mindful of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) legislation from 2023 onwards● Ongoing work	Priority for all 'red' action points. Will be necessary for 2026 - 2029 consultation process
1.2	Complete, see Slides 2 - 4	n/a
1.3	Complete, see individual Action Point updates	n/a

1. Use a Range of Relevant Data to Identify Priorities and Inform Next Steps

1.4 Produce Accessibility Standards to inform future mainstream and specialist provision school estate development.

Action Point	Progress	Timescale Update
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="388 456 1141 543">● Informal Additional Support Needs (ASN) School Estate 'brief' in draft<li data-bbox="388 560 1213 702">● Accessibility Standards document still to be created and shared/reviewed by partners e.g. Wallyford secondary campus stakeholders<li data-bbox="388 718 1213 805">● Access should be evident in plans resulting in fewer individual adaptations<li data-bbox="388 822 1222 964">● Specialist equipment e.g. Soundfield systems, guiding handrails etc should be evident in planning stage	Priority for 2023/24

2. Develop Inclusive Practice Across All East Lothian Schools

2.1 Audit sample of schools' professional learning and current implementation of the CIRCLE document.

2.2 Develop implementation plan to target identified schools.

2.3 Support identified settings so that all primary and secondary schools embed the CIRCLE document at whole school and individual level.

Action Point	Progress	Timescale Update
2.1	Complete, see Child Inclusion Research into Curriculum Learning Education (CIRCLE) implementation plan	n/a
2.2	Complete, see CIRCLE implementation plan	n/a
2.3	In progress, see CIRCLE implementation plan	Continued implementation into 2023/24 - likely expanding to include Early Years settings

2. Develop Inclusive Practice Across All East Lothian Schools

2.4 Develop implementation plan to introduce the SCERTS framework to specialist provisions.

2.5 Enable stakeholders to participate in multi-agency small tests of change to inform cycle of improvement.

2.6 Support specialist provisions to embed SCERTS in Action in practice for identified individuals.

Action Point	Progress	Timescale Update
2.4	Complete, see Social Communication; Emotional Regulation; Transactional Support (SCERTS) implementation plan	n/a
2.5	In progress	Continued implementation into 2023/24
2.6	In progress	Continued implementation into 2023/24 - likely expanding beyond our specialist provisions

2. Develop Inclusive Practice Across All East Lothian Schools

2.7 Develop introductory Deaf Awareness course for all school staff to be facilitated through LearnPro platform.

2.8 Monitor engagement and completion of course data.

Action Point	Progress	Timescale Update
2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Deaf Awareness course to be designed by Teachers of the Deaf● Course to be uploaded to LearnPro and accessible by all those with a log in● Course to be promoted through Staff Development team and EduHub website● Collated data regarding how many staff have completed the course, their role and where they are based will be available to inform next steps	2024 - 2026
2.8	No update	2024 - 2026

2. Develop Inclusive Practice Across All East Lothian Schools

2.9 Develop a tiered framework outlining the offer of mental health training across East Lothian to improve the consistency of workforce development.

Action Point	Progress	Timescale Update
2.9	No update - focus for Mental Health and Wellbeing has been on establishing the Single Point of Access and co-ordinating participating services.	2024 - 2026

3. Improve Participation by Empowering Children and Young People to Communicate

3.1 Audit Early Learning & Childcare settings to establish current implementation of Signalong.

3.2 Develop implementation plan to target identified settings.

3.3 Support identified settings so that all Early Learning and Childcare settings embed Signalong as part of their universal inclusive practice.

Action Point	Progress	Timescale Update
3.1	Complete	n/a
3.2	In progress	Likely to be complete by Mar 2023
3.3	Will be informed by 3.2	2023 - 2025

3. Improve Participation by Empowering Children and Young People to Communicate

3.4 Establish a multi-agency partnership group to monitor and improve access to Assistive Technology including but not limited to, Augmentative and Alternative Communication.

Action Point	Progress	Timescale Update
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Collaborative working established through Additional Support for Learning Officers (ASLO) and Assistive Technology for Learning Across Scotland (ATLAS) networks● Key stakeholders within local authority identified and communication is frequent● Wider cross-authority work ongoing● Focus has been on Boardmarker access challenges / purchase of Widgit subscription	2023/24

3. Improve Participation by Empowering Children and Young People to Communicate

3.5 Audit current methods for gathering views with particular reference to the voice of children, young people, parents and carers.

3.6 Develop partnership working through parent mentoring programme and children/young people forum in line with the ASL review recommendations (2020).

Action Point	Progress	Timescale Update
3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Children's Strategic Partnership contact identified● UNCRC legislation imminent - priority for identified Education Support Officer	Priority 2023/24
3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Radical Redesign parent partnership work ongoing● Monitored by Inclusion & Wellbeing Service	Continued implementation into 2023/24



Included, Engaged & Involved

Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility for All

POLICY: NOVEMBER 2022



Preface

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Contents

1	Introduction and Rationale	4
2	Legislative Context	6
3	Key Principles for Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility.....	8
4	An Inclusive Education in East Lothian	9
4.1	CIRCLE	11
4.2	Nurture.....	13
4.3	Accessibility.....	15
4.4	Accessibility Strategy	16
5	Partnerships	17
5.1	Recognising and Realising Children’s Rights	19
5.2	Solution Oriented Approaches.....	20
5.3	Our Roles and Responsibilities.....	21
	Appendix 1: Relevant Legislation and National Guidance	24
	Appendix 2: Relevant East Lothian Council Policy and Guidance	25
	Appendix 3: Accessibility Strategy Priorities.....	26
	Appendix 4: References and Useful Links	26

1 Introduction and Rationale

East Lothian Council believes that inclusion, equality and accessibility are essential components for schools to achieve equity and excellence in education for all our children and young people. An inclusive approach, with a celebration of diversity and an ambition for all to achieve is essential to getting it right for every child and raising attainment for all.

Inclusion

An inclusive education aims to ensure the full participation of learners in the curriculum and the wider community, to enable the highest achievements and attainments of all and promote a sense of belonging. This ethos will impact on the cultures, policies and practice of every establishment and service, and in particular, promote the learning and participation of vulnerable children and young people. It is vital that barriers to learning are challenged and East Lothian Council is committed to continuing improvement.

Equality

Equality is the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct. It is also the advancement of equality of opportunity and fostering of good relationships to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. The Equality Act (2010) provides legislative protection to the nine protected characteristics of age, race, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and places duties on local authorities related to these protected characteristics. **An intersectional approach must be taken when considering these characteristics and any subsequent barriers to Education.**

Accessibility

In East Lothian, the Education & Children's Service's approach to celebrating and supporting diversity is demonstrated in our day to day work and our commitment to providing high quality education that is accessible for all. The Service aims to actively promote equality of opportunity for all learners. In order to ensure accessibility for all, reasonable adjustments may be required to support individual learners.

Challenge Question –

'To what extent are our approaches improving learning for all?'

(How Good Is Our School 4, 1.2 Leadership of Learning)

This policy details the actions required by all learning establishments, and aspires to ensure the ongoing development of inclusive practices within East Lothian Council. It complements and is integrated within a suite of policies and guidance (see Appendix 2) which align with the local authority's vision for all its children and young people – *Living and Learning in East Lothian*.

These policies provide a framework for the Service to address the additional support and wellbeing needs of children and young people in partnership with other agencies and the wider community. They are more than a statement of good intentions; guidance must be acted upon, embedded in practice, and regularly monitored to ensure that barriers to learning are reduced. We want, and expect the best for, and from our children and young people.

Challenge Question –

'Do all staff have sufficiently high aspirations and expectations for all children and young people?'

(How Good Is Our School 4, 1.1 Self-Evaluation for Self-Improvement)

2 Legislative Context

The current legislative and policy landscape includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- The *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000* requires education authorities to provide education for all children in mainstream schools, except under certain circumstances. In addition, it places a new duty: to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person, and to involve them in decisions which will affect them significantly.
- The *Education (Disability Strategies and Pupil Records)(Scotland) Act 2002*. Schools must make reasonable adjustments for the needs of disabled children and schools must not discriminate against disabled children. The education authority must prepare and implement an accessibility strategy covering consecutive three year periods to remove any barriers disabled pupils face when accessing the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, school buildings and/or information.
- The *Children and Young People Act (2014)* has wide reaching powers to promote the Scottish Government aims to encourage effective and targeted services for children and families as well as the promotion of children's rights. Through the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) National Practice Model, the Act promotes cross-boundary models of service delivery to make best use of expertise and resources in an integrated way with the wellbeing of children and young people at its centre. GIRFEC is designed to support families by making sure children and young people can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. The aim is to help them to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected. It informs our planning practices in East Lothian through a staged intervention framework focusing on Universal, Additional or Targeted support.
- The *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004* (and subsequent amendments in 2009 and 2018) outlines the concept of Additional Support Needs and the functions and duties that are placed on education authorities to identify and support those needs.
- *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice (third edition) 2017* which explains the duties on education authorities and other agencies to support children and young people's learning. It provides guidance on the ASL Act's provisions as well as on the supporting framework of secondary legislation.
- The *Equality Act (2010)* simplified and strengthened previous protections for children and young people with 'protected characteristics' from discrimination. This strengthened inclusion in education, including school trips and activities, for all children and young people regardless of their additional support needs or disability. The Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if they have a "physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial or long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities".
- The *Curriculum for Excellence* aims to provide a coherent, more flexible curriculum for all children and young people aged 3-18 years. The curriculum comprises the totality of

experiences which are planned for children and young people wherever they are being educated. Entitlement includes: a coherent curriculum from 3-18 years; a broad general education until S3; a senior phase after S3; personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the curriculum; and support in moving into a positive and sustained destination beyond school.

- The National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education sets out the Scottish Government's vision and priorities for our children's progress in learning. The Framework, part of *the Education (Scotland) Act 2016*, is key in driving work to continually improve Scottish education and close the attainment gap, delivering both excellence and equity.
- *How good is our school? (4th Edition)*. HGIOS4 is the national guidance for school self-evaluation. The quality indicators and supporting toolkit assist schools in the process of self-improvement. Quality indicators 3.1 (Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion) and 3.2 (Raising attainment and achievement) provide schools with the means to engage in evidence-based analysis of what is working well and what needs to improve, including support for pupils with a disability.

Taken together, these require local authorities to consider a wide range of issues facing children and young people, and put in place processes and supports to:

- Identify and provide support to allow children and young people to overcome any barriers to learning;
- Prevent discrimination of pupils with disabilities/protected characteristics and provide reasonable adjustments to ensure equality of opportunity in learning;
- Plan for accessibility of the curriculum, school information and physical environment;
- Promote the wellbeing of children and young people.

3 Key Principles for Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility

East Lothian Council promotes the following key principles:

- All children and young people have a right to education and East Lothian Council has a duty to provide this education.
- Everyone in a school or learning establishment should feel they are in a safe and nurturing environment.
- A consistent and well-maintained commitment to a whole school ethos of prevention, early intervention and support as the context for the promotion of positive relationships and learning.
- All children and young people need to be included, engaged and involved in their learning.
- All children and young people have the right to get the support they need to benefit fully from their education.
- All children and young people should have access to an environment that promotes respect and equality, celebrates diversity, and promotes positive relationships.
- A commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child should be demonstrated and developed at all times.
- Children and young people have a universal and inalienable right to an education. It is the duty of East Lothian Council, all schools, learning establishments and every member of staff to create the relationship and environments within which every child and young person can realise this right.

“The central message is simple: every learner matters and matters equally.” (UNESCO, 2017)

4 An Inclusive Education in East Lothian

UNESCO's 2017 'A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education' guidance informs us of four principles of Inclusion:

- **Inclusion is an ongoing process.** It is a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to learner diversity. It is about respecting diversity and the different needs, abilities and characteristics of learners. It is both about learning how to support difference, and learning how to learn from difference. In this way, differences come to be seen more positively as a stimulus for fostering learning among children and adults.
- **Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers.** Inclusion means taking positive action in order to enable achievement for all by encouraging and developing the potential of every child or young person. Barriers may take different forms, some of which are to do with the way schools are organised, the pedagogy of the teaching provided, and the ways in which children's progress is evaluated.
- **Inclusion is about the presence, participation, achievement and support of all learners.** 'Presence' is concerned with where children are educated, and how reliably and punctually they attend; 'participation' relates to the quality of their experiences whilst they are there and therefore, must incorporate the views of the learners themselves; 'achievement' is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum; and 'support' is about ensuring appropriate and adequate support when required.
- **Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or at risk of underachievement.** This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure particular groups of learners, who may be most at risk, are carefully monitored and where necessary, steps are taken to ensure they are present, participating, achieving and supported within schools. Every learner matters and matters equally.



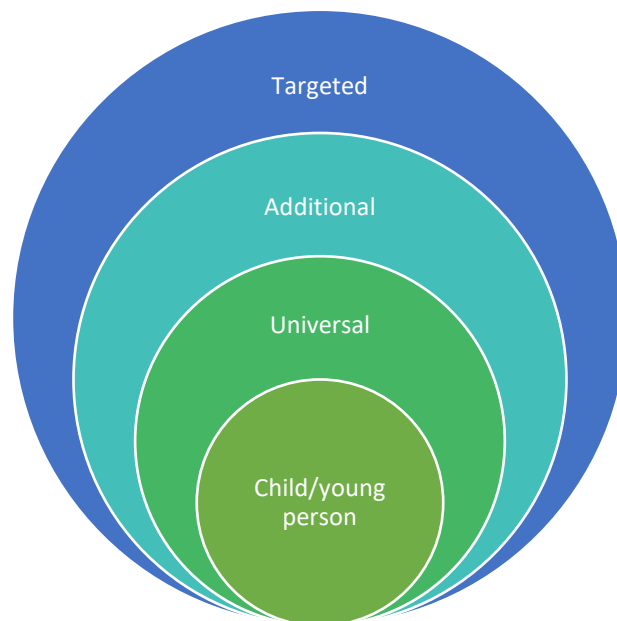
Education in East Lothian Council is based on this inclusive ethos which supports all learners being treated fairly, having equality of opportunity and having a sense of belonging in their learning environment.

Education & Children’s Services aims to ensure that:

- Barriers to learning will be identified and reduced;
- Children and young people will be educated within their own community, except in *exceptional* circumstances;
- Children and young people will be involved in planning to meet their needs;
- Children and young people will be educated in mainstream schools wherever possible.

“Inclusion is a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners. Equity is about ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance.” (UNESCO 2017)

Driven by ‘Getting it Right for Every Child’, East Lothian uses a three-staged intervention framework to meet all learners’ needs at either Universal, Additional or Targeted Level as appropriate:



East Lothian is committed to strengthening our offer of universal support and building capacity within our schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings in order to facilitate a truly inclusive education. We expect every child or young person to experience universal inclusive practice whether they have an identified need or not as is indicated by its very name, universal practice benefits everyone.

4.1 CIRCLE

Curriculum for Excellence provides the national curricular framework, and this is supplemented within East Lothian by the use of the CIRCLE primary and secondary inclusive practice resource. This resource focuses on four key areas: *Skills, Motivation, Structures and Routines*, and *Environment* to meet the needs of all learners and complements our authority-wide commitment to a nurturing approach. These inclusive practices support all staff within education to develop positive, respectful relationships with children and young people, and to take account of the needs of individuals whilst planning for all.



CIRCLE's Inclusive Classroom Scale, can be used to review, reflect on and develop a positive learning environment for all and is the starting point for all practitioners as part of our universal practice.

The following strategies should always be considered:

Physical Environment

- Ensure the classroom is well organised with everything consistently and well labelled.
- Arrange the class to promote good interaction. Consider learners who have additional support needs - do they need to sit close to the door to enable them to leave quickly; do they need to sit away from the window to reduce distractions; do they need to sit near the teacher to maximise attention and concentration or to ensure they can hear or access resources?
- Some learners find elements of the physical environment overwhelmingly distracting e.g. lighting, noise levels, visual stimulation, and proximity to peers. Sometimes further adaptations over and above seating arrangements may be required e.g. an individual work station, a "safe space", and alternative learning environments.
- Where visual supports are in place, ensure that these support, are consistent and don't add to the distraction.
- Some learners may require the use of agreed sensory supports e.g. fidget supports or move and sit cushions. Others may require specialist equipment. Further guidance and support can be provided by East Lothian Council's Access Officer.

Social Environment

- Aim to develop a classroom culture where everyone feels valued and secure, and individual differences are respected.
- Be aware that some learners can feel anxious about performing in front of the class. Take this into consideration.
- Be aware of peer relationships and take these into consideration when planning seating and groupings.
- Be aware of how language is being used and consider differentiating language and instructions as a routine part of your practice.
- All behaviour is communication so reflect on what message might lie behind the behaviour.

- Teach learners how to recognise/understand their emotions.
- Model appropriate social and emotional skills during interactions.
- Teach social skills through providing specific interaction activities.

Structures and Routines

- Consider structures and routines in terms of how the lesson/day/week is structured.
- Approaches such as consistent seating plans can help reduce anxiety or distraction for learners.
- Where possible, advise of any changes to the routine or environment in advance.
- The regular use of active learning and multi-sensory learning should help ensure that learners know that their particular learning style is likely to be met during the lesson.
- Use a consistent approach to behaviour and set clear and specific class expectations and routines in collaboration with class members.
- Assign positive roles to class members to promote positive views of themselves.
- Preparing individual children and whole classes for changes – big or small - can be crucial in supporting them to feel safe and lower anxiety levels.

Motivation

- A learner-centred approach is crucial to engaging learners.
- Values, abilities and interests are useful themes for encouraging motivation.

Values

- Listen to and value learners' views, thoughts and ideas.
- Involve learners in target setting and self-assessment.
- Model respectful relationships and restorative approaches.

Abilities

- Differentiate work so that goals are realistic and achievable whilst still providing enjoyment and challenge.

Interests

- Utilise learners' interests or experiences when designing lessons.
- Allow learners an element of personalisation and choice.
- Use experiential learning, multi-sensory approaches and/or technology to motivate.

Challenge Question –

'Have we successfully established an inclusive learning environment? How do we know?'

(How Good Is Our School 4, 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion)

Further detail of how the needs of learners are identified and assessed, and the specific systems East Lothian has in place for *Additional* and *Targeted* support, can be found in the Included, Engaged & Involved: Identifying, Assessing and Providing for Additional Support Needs of Children and Young People policy.

4.2 Nurture

In alignment with these inclusive practices, East Lothian recognises that good teaching and learning begin with positive relationships. Relationships fulfil our most fundamental needs as humans – social connectedness. A nurturing approach recognises that positive relationships are central to both learning and wellbeing.

“Nurturing approaches are underpinned by an understanding of attachment theory, which recognises the importance of early relational experiences in shaping children’s social, emotional and cognitive development.” (Golding et al, 2016)

Nurture is underpinned by *six guiding principles* and there is an expectation that these will be understood and fully embedded in practice across all of our schools and Early Learning & Childcare settings.



1. Learning is understood developmentally

Learning should not be threatening or overwhelming. We should offer activities that are motivating and enjoyable. These should be designed to help children and young people recognise and appreciate their personal strengths. Consider children and young people's different attachment needs (Geddes, 2006). Individuals who find relationships difficult may need tasks they can work on independently at first, giving them time to build their tolerance of staff presence. Children and young people who need constant adult connection might require short time-limited tasks with regular staff feedback and reassurance.

2. The setting offers a safe base

Any change can affect children differently depending on the balance of other protective and risk factors in their lives. We need to ensure that our settings offer a secure emotional base for children. We need to prioritise and support children's social and emotional development to enable them to feel safe. The social connections we can make across the whole school community can provide everyone with emotional support and safety. Words of appreciation, gratitude, gestures of kindness, and special events where everyone can come together can all help.

3. Nurture is important for wellbeing

It is important to accept and value all feelings and emotions – it is ok not to be ok. We should look for effort and persistence, naming and valuing it in our discussions with learners. If a child or young person is displaying self-negating behaviours, we do not dismiss this out of hand. We can let them know when we see observable change and progress, and help them see mistakes as an integral and valuable part of the learning process.

4. Language is a vital means of communication

Children will look to those around them for language to describe shared experiences and also to understand and put into words their individual experiences. We need to encourage children and young people to tune in to their thoughts and feelings, teaching them the vocabulary of emotion. We can talk about previous difficulties and challenges that have been overcome, individually and collectively: discussing what helped and how it was tackled. We can be mindful that not all children and young people want to talk. They may prefer to express and process their emotions through doing, sharing and play.

5. All behaviour is communication

We acknowledge that how children behave is communication and regularly ask ourselves "*What is this telling me?*" At times, we may observe some confusing or concerning behaviours from children. It is important to remember that any behaviour makes sense to the person displaying it given their unique experiences. It is through our relationships with them that we will be able to interpret their behaviour and work out how best to support them with what has happened, allowing them to recover and reconnect.

6. The importance of transitions

Some children will cope with transitions with minimal support and others will find this more challenging and we need to be flexible and responsive to individual needs. Staff, children and families need time to meet, share and reconnect. Establishing a key adult, maintaining routines and the use of familiar environments, experiences and transitional experiences will help to support this.

East Lothian Council is fully committed to a positive relational and nurturing approach in all of our educational settings. Further detail can be found in both the Respect for All: Promoting Positive and Respectful Relationships in All our Schools, and Included, Engaged & Involved: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions policies.

4.3 Accessibility

East Lothian is committed to working collegiately with all relevant stakeholders to identify and remove barriers to learning. There is an ongoing duty incumbent on all to promote equality of opportunity, and celebrate diversity including disabilities and additional support needs. Everyone should strive to create inclusive environments in which the needs of all pupils can be met and in which children and young people can flourish in a safe and nurturing environment.

Current legislation protects people with different types of disabilities including, but not limited to, the following broad groups:

- Communication Difficulties
- Hearing Impairments
- Specific Learning Difficulties, such as dyslexia
- Visual Impairments
- Developmental Language Disorders
- Physical Difficulties/Motor Impairments
- Neurodevelopmental disorders, such as Autism

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. These activities may include:

- Mobility
- Manual Dexterity
- Physical Co-ordination
- Continence
- Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- Speech, Hearing or Eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- Perception of risk or physical danger
- Social interactions
- Participation in social activities

"Long term" is defined as lasting or likely to last for at least 12 months, or for the rest of the person's life.

Challenge Question –

'How well are we removing barriers to learning and ensuring equity for all?'

(How Good Is Our School 4, 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement)

4.4 Accessibility Strategy

The Accessibility Strategy is a statutory duty for local authorities, and schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings must take the Strategy into account in any management decisions and improvement planning. This policy includes the authority's Accessibility Strategy which covers consecutive three year periods.

The purpose of the Accessibility Strategy is to:

- increase disabled pupils' participation in the **curriculum**;
- improve the **physical environment** of schools to enable better access to education and associated services provided;
- improve **communication** with disabled pupils. In particular, relating to the provision of information in appropriate alternative formats, taking account of any preferences expressed by them or their parents/carers.

These are referred to as *planning duties* in associated legislation.

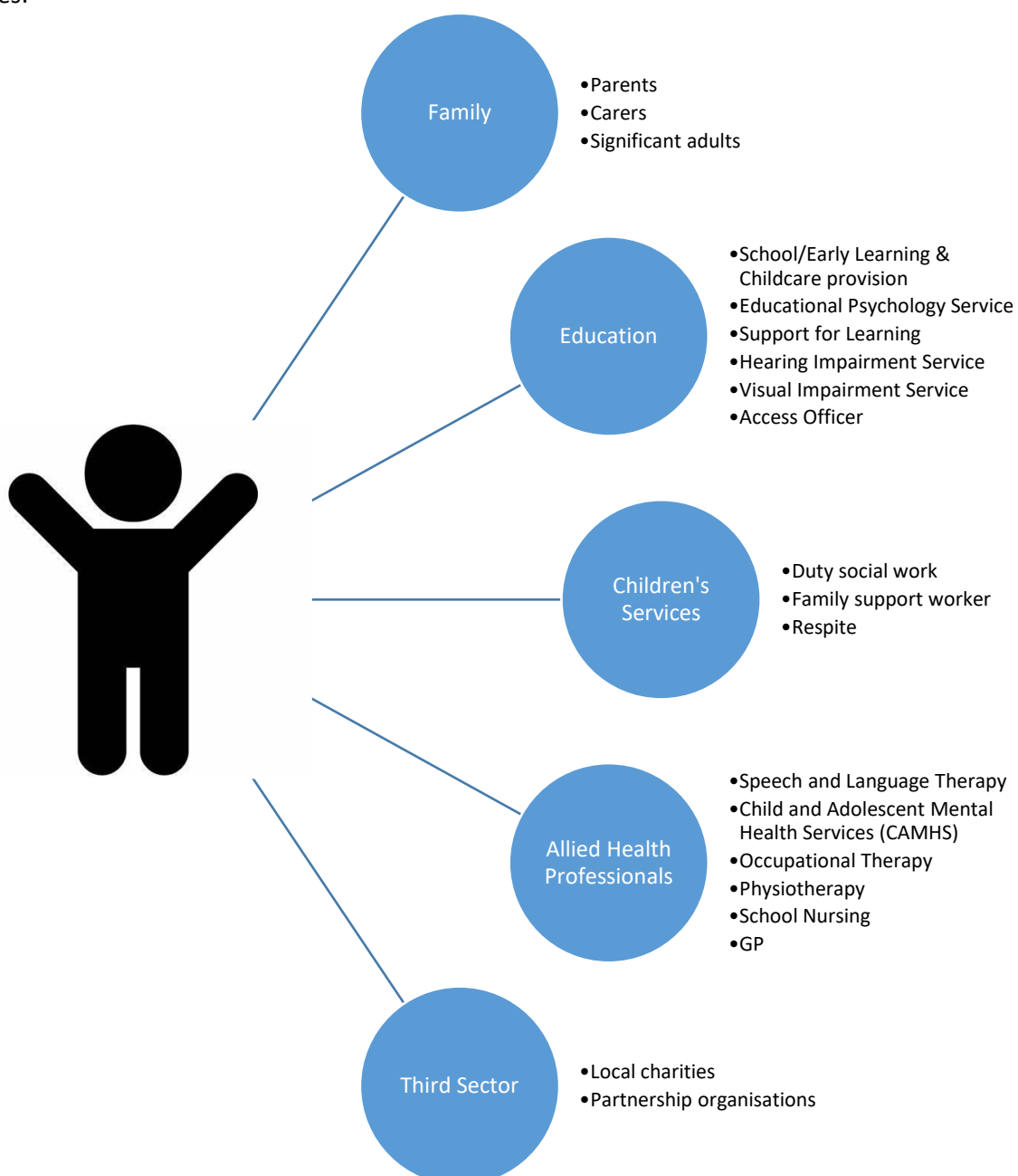
The Accessibility Strategy includes a detailed Action Plan (see Appendix 3) which is monitored and reviewed annually over a 3 year period by a multi-agency Steering Group. As part of our commitment to partnership working, the steering group will include children/young people and their families as valued participants in the monitoring process. An interim report is completed following each review.

“School is a part, and preparation for, life. Being with people with disabilities/differences is a better way of building understanding and respect than learning about them from a book. Everyone benefits from the inclusion of people with differences.” (East Lothian parent, 2020)

5 Partnerships

“The development of an empowered system is dependent on generating and sustaining high levels of relational trust and authentic collaboration. Relational trust supports the development of challenging conversations which are key to developing authentic collaboration.”
(Association of Directors of Education in Scotland, 2019)

East Lothian recognises the importance of *authentic collaboration* with all stakeholders in order to facilitate truly inclusive learning experiences for all our children and young people. An individual may have a complex network of support which can include but is by no means limited to, the following examples:



Authentic collaboration across a range of services such as those noted above whilst maintaining the inclusion of the child/young person in decision making, requires commitment to a common goal and the means to communicate effectively. The independent review of the implementation of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 carried out in 2019, substantiated our conviction to collaboration with a particular focus on parents and families.

The following recommendations were made:

Recommendation 6.1 Relationships between schools and parents

- Schools and local authorities must work in partnership with parents and carers to develop, and deliver, ways of working together that support and promote positive relationships, communication and co-operation.
- This must include clear pathways on transitions for children and young people with additional support needs, in the context of learning for life, allowing parents, carers, children, young people and professionals to be informed and supported at key transition points.
- Parents and carers must be involved as equal partners in the development of key guidance, to contribute their knowledge and lived experience.
- Further investment is needed to strengthen support services for families; allowing these services, and the support that they provide, to be embedded.
- The benefits of the use of mediation must be widely promoted at a national, regional and local level and consideration should be given to how mediation can be developed through professional learning, to support the workforce.

We recognise that there is certainly more to be done in this area and welcome the recommendations from the 2019 ASL Review. Progress has been made within East Lothian with regards to ensuring children and young people have a voice in decisions that affect their education such as the promotion of the UNCRC's Rights Respecting Schools programme, Education Scotland's establishment of 'Inclusion Ambassadors', and our GIRFEC aligned Child's Planning process which seeks the child/young person's views as well as the family's and relevant service(s)' input at every stage of the process.

East Lothian is committed to continually improving our service with regards to working with parents/families as valued partners. Further detail regarding current East Lothian practices for working with children, young people and parents can be found in the Included, Engaged & Involved: Identifying, Assessing and Providing for Additional Support Needs of Children and Young People policy.

5.1 Recognising and Realising Children's Rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a comprehensive and internationally binding agreement on the rights of children. It is based on equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation.

A rights respecting school is an environment where children's rights are taught, observed, respected, protected and promoted. Our ambition is to ensure that every child and young person in our learning communities experiences this.

All of East Lothian's schools are being encouraged to register with UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) programme. The benefits of this programme should go beyond the school and into the community as a whole:

- All children and adults learn about the UNCRC and the overarching set of values which should bring change to the whole school character and atmosphere improving the climate for learning;
- Positive relationships between learners and staff reduces the hierarchical divide due to the rights respecting language;
- Learners' self-esteem and feelings of being valued improve;
- Increased levels of respect for each other with a better understanding of religions, cultures and abilities which are different to their own;
- Improved attainment, attendance and a reduction in exclusions;
- The school develops a rights respecting ethos and children are empowered to become active citizens and learners;
- It strengthens a consultative approach and a platform for better parental engagement and discussion as well as collaborative working;
- A feeling of empowerment for both adults and learners.

It should also be noted that children over 12 years of age now, broadly speaking, have similar rights to parents and young people with respect to their additional support needs. The extension to children's rights is accompanied by safeguards in the form of assessments of capacity and consideration of impact on a child's wellbeing. Further detail of this legislation can be found in the Included, Engaged & Involved: Identifying, Assessing and Providing for Additional Support Needs of Children and Young People policy.

"The true measure of inclusion is not through external and objective criteria, it is in the child or young person's own experience and how they feel." (Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential, 2020)

5.2 Solution Oriented Approaches

Solution oriented approaches provide staff with opportunities to explore aspects of their working environment and relationships within it, by visualising the desired outcome rather than focusing on the problem. When difficulties arise, solution oriented approaches enable an individual or group of people to identify the skills, strengths and resources that they already have which can help them to reach a solution.

The approach helps individuals/groups identify what is working well, and how positive experiences can be built upon in the future. At the same time, by visualising in great detail what the desired outcome is, individuals/groups are more able to identify the next small steps needed in order to make progress. As progress is the key factor, sometimes the steps are very small. Those setting goals are encouraged to think about how others will know they are making progress. In this way, it facilitates reflective thinking and the capacity to see situations from different perspectives. Moreover, the persistent evaluation of goals, often on a 0 – 10 scale, encourages the same evidence based approach to monitoring progress that schools are asked to implement in an academic context. Initially, an individual or group is supported to use a solution oriented approach, but they then internalise the way of thinking which in turn supports the development of resilience.

Key principles include:

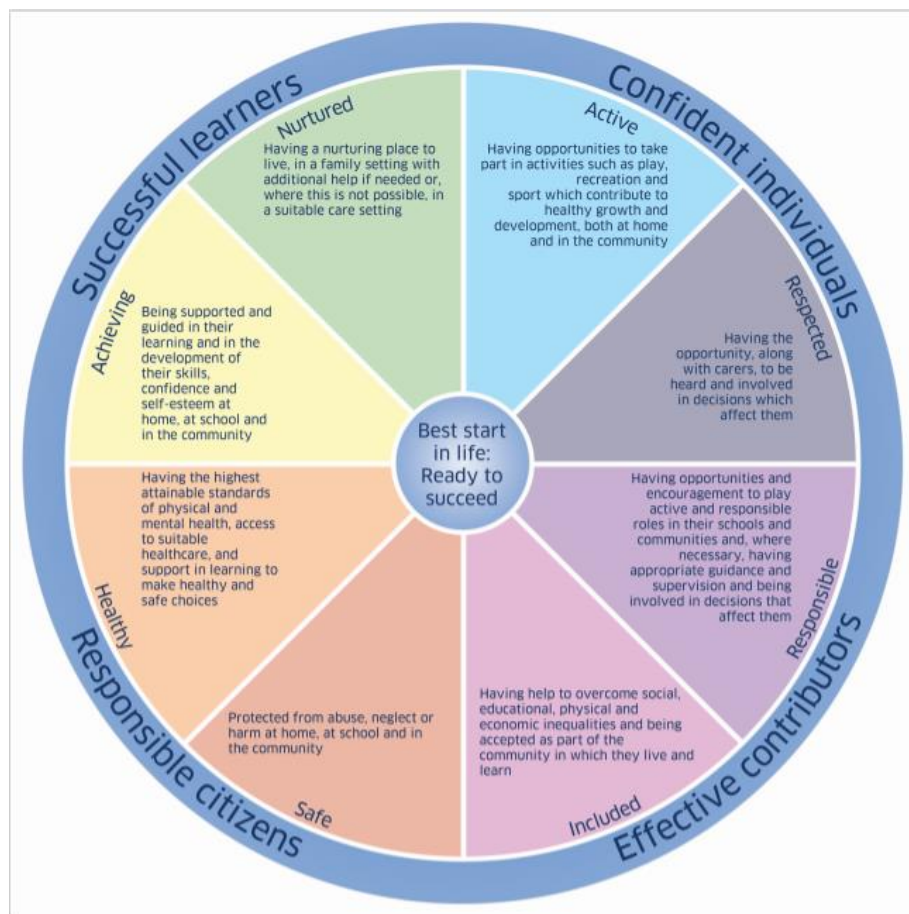
- If it's not broken, don't fix it
- If it works, do more of it
- If it's not working, do something different
- Small steps can lead to big changes
- The solution is not necessarily directly related to the problem
- The language for solution development is different from that needed to describe a problem
- No problems happen all the time, there are always exceptions that can be utilised
- The future is both created and negotiable

There is an underlying belief that people have the necessary resources to make changes; everyone has their own ways of solving problems; collaboration enhances change; and people need to be engaged in the process of change to want it to happen. It is the role and responsibility of the adult/facilitator to find a way to engage the young person where appropriate.

The solution oriented approach can often be seen in other methodology widely used in schools, such as visual planning. It can be used as a framework for meetings including Child's Planning Meetings, pre-and post-exclusion meetings and professional development reviews.

In East Lothian's Children's Services, the Signs of Safety framework to assess safeguarding and child protection issues is based on a solution oriented approach.

5.3 Our Roles and Responsibilities



It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that our children/young people are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included in line with Getting it Right for Every Child. In addition to this, all education staff have a vital role to play to realise East Lothian's aspiration for all our learners to be present, supported, participating and achieving without exception.

School and Early Learning & Childcare Settings

There are a range of key adults across our education settings and the term 'school staff' here refers to any significant adult that a child/young person will come across during their school day, however infrequently. For example, classroom assistants, early years practitioners, visiting specialists, administrative staff, volunteers etc. It is the duty of *all* to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all our children and young people in order for them to feel safe and nurtured. Furthermore, there is a responsibility for school staff to learn about the specific practices in place within one's own setting to enable a respectful, inclusive school culture.

Challenge Question –

'How do we ensure there is an ethos and culture of inclusion, participation and positive relationships across the whole learning community?'

(How Good Is Our School 4, 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion)

In addition to this, all teaching staff should meet the Standard for Full Registration regulated by the General Teaching Council (Scotland). These Standards include but are not limited to:

‘As a registered teacher you are required to demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of:

- additional support needs;
- curriculum content and its relevance to the education of every learner;
- contractual, pastoral and legal responsibilities, for example, in relation to equality, diversity, inclusion, additional support needs, child protection, and wellbeing;
- the stages of learners’ cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and psychological development and know how to use this information to support learning and wellbeing;
- how to plan for effective assessment, teaching and learning, individually and collaboratively, across different contexts, and in order to support the needs of every learner;
- how to adapt planning approaches to ensure that the needs of every learner are effectively addressed;
- the roles and responsibilities of teachers in establishing and sustaining positive and purposeful relationships across the learning community.

Demonstrate the professional skills and abilities required to:

- identify the potential barriers to learning and plan differentiated and appropriately challenging learning experiences to ensure learning is accessible for every learner;
- contribute to a rights respecting culture where learners meaningfully participate in decisions related to their learning, wellbeing, learning environment and their school;
- create a safe, caring and purposeful learning environment which is welcoming and inclusive, well managed and well organised;
- demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of wellbeing indicators, childhood development and the impact of additional support needs;
- recognise that childhood experiences impact on the learning and wellbeing of children and young people and actively respond in appropriate ways, seeking advice and collaborating as required;
- utilise and evaluate a variety of strategies to nurture caring and supportive and purposeful relationships with learners and celebrate success;
- recognise where learners with additional support needs require alternative approaches and seek support as necessary;
- commit to and demonstrate equity and inclusion to advance equality of opportunity between learners who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not and foster good relations.’

Challenge Question –

To what extent does our curriculum promote equity and raise attainment for all children and young people?

(How Good Is Our School 4, 2.2 Curriculum)

The Standard for Full Registration stipulates that teachers wishing to maintain their professional status must “demonstrate care and commitment to working with every learner, embracing diversity to ensure that every learner feels welcome, included and ready to learn” confirming that inclusive practice is now an intrinsic and expected element of education in Scotland.

Headteachers and Senior Leadership Teams

It is the duty of senior staff in schools to lead their school in developing an ethos in which all children and young people are nurtured and included. There is also an expectation that they will contribute to the development of inclusion in both principle and practice across the local authority.

Senior Leadership Teams must lead and model the best possible practice in relation to inclusion, and challenge and support any who do not meet those standards and expectations. It is their responsibility to ensure that East Lothian's policies relating to children's safety and wellbeing are fully and effectively implemented, and that planning to meet individual needs through the Child's Planning Framework is embedded in practice.

They must evaluate their own professional development and keep up to date with thinking and research on inclusion, communicating any changes in policy and legislation to their staff ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. A culture of authentic collaboration should be modelled and promoted to enable effective partnership working.

Educational Psychology Service

East Lothian's Educational Psychology Service provides additional support and challenge to develop an ethos of inclusion throughout schools and across the local authority.

It is an Educational Psychologist's role to work within the agreed structures for staged intervention and support schools in relation to the Child's Planning Framework. They must advise and guide Senior Leadership Teams regarding any considerations of alternative pathways, and use their professional skill and expertise to guide and support assessment, developing the capacity of schools and staff to meet the needs of children and young people.

It is their responsibility to support staff in understanding both policy and practice in relation to key aspects of inclusion and work effectively with colleagues, enabling collaborative working across the school and East Lothian.

Education & Children's Services

It is the duty of the local authority to ensure that across East Lothian, policies and processes are relevant, in line with current legislation, and are communicated effectively.

At strategic and operational level, authority staff must take forward the commitment of East Lothian to develop as a nurturing and inclusive authority. It is their role to monitor and evaluate the ways in which schools are using agreed East Lothian policy and practice to ensure that the needs of children and young people are met. Authority staff must respond appropriately to concerns schools raise and to referrals for possible alternative pathways.

Authority staff also have a responsibility to evaluate their own professional development, work collaboratively with all stakeholders, and model best possible practice in relation to inclusion.

All professionals working within East Lothian Council must keep children and their wellbeing at the heart of all decisions that are made, working collaboratively to find solutions to any challenges that arise.

Appendix 1: Relevant Legislation and National Guidance

- *The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 amendment*
- *The Children (Scotland) Act 1995*
- *The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000*
- *The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupil Records) (Scotland) Act 2002*
- *The Equality Act (2010)*
- *The Children and Young People Act (2014)*
- *The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016*
- *The Education (Scotland) Act 1980*
- *The Education (Scotland) Act 2016*
- *Supporting Children's Learning: Code of Practice (third edition) 2017*
- The *National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education*
- *GTCS Standards for Full Registration*
- *How Good is Our School? 4th Edition*
- *Supporting Transgender Young People in Schools (2021)*

Appendix 2: Relevant East Lothian Council Policy and Guidance

All of the following documents can be found [here](#).

- Child's Planning Framework guidance (2020)
- Included, Engaged & Involved: Identifying, Assessing and Providing for Additional Support Needs of Children and Young People (2018)
- The Handbook of Procedures for the Management of Pupils with Healthcare Needs in Educational Establishments (2019)
- Admission to Specialist Educational Provision guidance (2017)
- Allocation of Resources to Support Children and Young People with Additional support needs (2017)
- Included, Engaged and Involved: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2018)
- Included, Engaged and Involved: Managing Distressed and Challenging Behaviour (2018)
- Included, Engaged and Involved: Safeguarding Policy (2018)
- Respect for All: Promoting Positive and Respectful Relationships in All our Schools (2020)
- Attendance policy (due 2021)
- [Nurture, Recovery and Reconnection \(2020\)](#)

Appendix 3: Accessibility Strategy Priorities

From the information gathered through multi-agency stakeholder consultation, the following overarching priorities have been identified for the Accessibility Strategy (2023 – 2026):

- Use a Range of Relevant Data to Identify Priorities and Inform Next Steps
- Develop Inclusive Practice Across All East Lothian Schools
- Improve Participation by Empowering Children and Young People to Communicate

Below are areas which were highlighted through the consultation process but are either outside the scope of the Accessibility Strategy or being addressed through other strategies, reviews etc:

- Promoting the UNCRC Rights Respecting Schools programme
- Offering British Sign Language as part of the curriculum
- Roll out and monitoring of the Progress & Achievement tracking tool to raise attainment for all and encourage positive destinations
- Transitions to positive destinations for children and young people with additional support needs
- Monitoring of school estate

A more detailed Accessibility Strategy Action Plan is available from the local authority upon request.

Appendix 4: References and Useful Links

- [CIRCLE](#)
- [Presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting: guidance \(2019\)](#)
- [Review of additional support for learning implementation: report \(2020\) - Support for Learning: All our Children and All their Potential](#)
- [Rights Respecting Schools - UNICEF](#)
- [A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education \(2017\)](#)
- Chapman, C (2019) Making sense of education reform: Where next for Scottish education? Manchester, UK: Association of Directors of Education in Scotland/The Staff College
- Geddes, H. (2006). *Attachment in the Classroom: A Practical Guide for Schools*. London: Worth Publishing Ltd.