

ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The analysis is divided into two sections:

- (A) Attendance; questions 1 to 3
- (B) Behaviour; questions 4 to 18.

Answers to questions have been rated as follows:

- 1 Agree
- 0.5 Agree with significant caveats
- 0 Disagree

There were 54 written responses of which 10 were secondary schools and 27 from primary schools; 10 responses did not specify either name or organisation.

In addition, three groups were consulted:

SEN/Inclusion Consultation Group re. attendance

YOT/ASBO Coordination Group re. behaviour

Community Safety Steering Group re. attendance and behaviour.

(A) ATTENDANCE: “Parenting Contracts’ and ‘Penalty Notices’ for Non-Attendance

- (1) There was overwhelming support for the proposed role of the EWS to issue ‘Penalty Notices’ with the caveat that schools should be consulted (which is part of the proposed Code of Conduct).
- (2) There was more equivocal support for issuing ‘Warning Notices’ and ‘Penalty Notices’ to parents taking their child out of school during term time for holidays (58% of primary and 40% of secondary schools supported this proposal). A number of respondents stated that criteria to determine when discretion should be exercised would be difficult to formulate and would not help headteachers across the County take a consistent approach; the SEN/Inclusion Consultation Group were very firmly of the opinion that a warning notice in all cases.
The main suggestions regarding discretion were in relation to ‘religious reasons’. Further advice has been sought regarding this, and it has been confirmed that ‘religious reasons’ are specifically exempt in law and contribute a valid reason for absence (and thus cannot constitute unauthorised absence).
In terms of the period covered, there was a clear consensus for a school year (12 months).
Concerns were raised by some respondents over whether the EWS could cope with the volume if all holidays of one day or more are included.
- (3) There was strong support for the LEA to collect fines.

Conclusion

Based on these responses it is proposed that:

- (i) The EWS will issue all 'Penalty Notices'.
- (ii) A 'Warning Notice' will be issued to all parents taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time of five or more days. This will be by way of a standard letter, the wording of which will be the subject of further consultation. For holidays of less than five days the headteacher will exercise discretion on whether the standard letter should be issued. This will be reviewed after one year of operation.
- (iii) A 'Penalty Notice' will be issued to parents taking their child out of school for a second time during a school year for a period of five or more days.
- (iv) Where a parent takes a child out of school for more than two or more holidays in term time, and one or more are less than five days, then the headteacher may request the EWS to issue a 'Penalty Notice'.

(B) BEHAVIOUR: “‘Parenting Contracts’, ‘Parenting Orders’, ‘Acceptable Behaviour Contracts’ (ABCs) and ‘Anti-Social Behaviour Orders’ (ASBOs)”

Parenting Contracts (Questions 4 to 11): Whilst there was strong support for the positive role 'Parenting Contracts' might play, there was considerable concern over how associated support/guidance should be funded. There was a more mixed response as to whether foster parents should be included; however, on balance, there was a consensus that they should.

Parenting Orders (Questions 12 to 15): Overall there was strong support for the proposals other than in relation to foster parents; however, on balance, there was a consensus that Parenting Orders should be used when appropriate in respect of foster parents.

ABCs and ASBOs (Questions 16 to 18): Strong support across all proposals, although some additions to the guidance were suggested by some respondents (i.e. in relation to the role of the school). There was also strong support from the YOT/ASBO Co-ordination Group.