

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 21 May 2013

Report on Commercial access to parents and children in schools

Item number	7.11
Report number	
Wards	All

Links

Coalition pledges	P5
Council outcomes	CO2
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

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Executive Summary

Report on Commercial access to parents and children in schools

Summary

The Education, Children and Families Committee, at its meeting on 5 March 2013, approved the following motion:

“This Committee notes that:

1. Commercial companies offering curriculum subject tutoring have been invited into primary school to do taster sessions in curriculum time classes.
2. Some commercial tutoring companies offer financial incentives to Parent Councils and schools to encourage access to children and parents and to encourage parents to buy products and services
3. Schoolbag letters home to parents can give the impression that companies are endorsed by the Council. Information from some companies gives the impression that they are approved providers of services
4. Parents have expressed concerns that the commercial companies are being allowed direct access to them and their children by Edinburgh schools.

Committee therefore requests that a report is prepared within one cycle setting out a clear policy for schools with regard to direct access to children and to providing information to parents on offers of commercial services, with the presumption that such service offers should be restricted.”

Several Head Teachers have confirmed that they would welcome support on dealing with requests from commercial companies for access to parents. This report describes how the Children and Families currently deals with requests which are made to centrally based officers from commercial companies and how we propose to support individual Head Teachers receiving similar requests.

Recommendations

1. The Education, Children and Families Committee notes the contents of this report and approves the measures taken to control and restrict commercial access to parents and children in schools.

Measures of success

All requests from Commercial Companies and Organisations to promote their products and services will be scrutinised in a consistent way.

Any successful requests will have to demonstrate clear educational benefits for children
Heads of Establishment will be supported fully in dealing with requests.

Financial impact

There is no financial impact

Equalities impact

There is no Equalities impact

Sustainability impact

Not applicable

Consultation and engagement

Primary and secondary head teachers were consulted during the development of the guidance on Commercial access to parents and children in schools.

Background reading / external references

Appendix 1 – Guidance on engaging or promoting the services or products of Commercial Companies and Organisations.

Report on Commercial access to parents and children in schools

1. Background

- 1.1 This report describes how Children and Families currently deals with requests to centrally based officers from commercial companies and organisations who wish to gain access, through schools, to children and parents to promote their products and services and sets out clear guidance which has been provided to Heads of Establishment who are approached by such companies and organisations.

2. Main report

- 2.1 A number and range of commercial companies and organisations contact Children and Families to promote their products and services. Some also contact educational establishments directly.
- 2.2 Approaches made directly to the Department are scrutinised by a Senior Manager to assess the potential educational benefits of such products and services. An appraisal of any financial benefit to the company is also undertaken as part of this process.
- 2.3 Only when there are clear and demonstrable educational benefits for children will information from companies and organisations be passed on to educational establishments for their consideration.
- 2.4 Companies and organisations can readily acquire addresses and e-mail contact details of educational establishments and make contact with them directly thus bypassing the central scrutiny process.
- 2.5 Clear guidance (Appendix 1) has been issued to all Heads of Establishment advising that any approach to engage with, or promote the services of, a commercial company or organisation should be directed to a Senior Manager in Children and Families for scrutiny.
- 2.6 Engagement of commercial companies and organisations who wish to gain access to parents and children will therefore be determined by the control measures in place. This will ensure that such service offers are restricted to those who can demonstrate clear educational benefit for children.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee notes the contents of this report and approves the measures taken to control and restrict commercial access to parents and children in schools.

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Links

Coalition pledges	P5. Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum
Council outcomes	CO2. Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3. Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential
Appendices	1. Guidance on engaging or promoting the services or products of Commercial Companies and Organisations.

Appendix 1

To All Heads of Establishment

From David Wright (Senior Education Manager – Schools)

Re Guidance on engaging or promoting the services or products of Commercial Companies and Organisations

1. A number and range of Commercial Companies and Organisations contact the Children and Families Department and Educational Establishments directly to engage or promote their products and services.
2. Any approaches made to the Department are subjected to close scrutiny to determine the potential educational benefits for pupils. The possible financial benefit to the Company or Organisation is also evaluated as part of this process.
3. Only where there are clear and demonstrable educational benefits for pupils will details from these Companies or Organisations be sent out to Educational Establishments.
4. These details will be sent out to you from the Schools and Community Services mailbox for your consideration.
5. Should any Companies or Organisations contact you directly, you should not engage or promote their services. You should direct the enquiry to your Senior Education Manager or Service Manager who will scrutinise the request. You should inform the company or organisation that this is per standard protocol.
6. Your manager will deal with the request and notify you of the outcome of the scrutiny process.