

# STATES OF JERSEY

## Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Student Suspension Review Sub-Panel

**FRIDAY, 20th NOVEMBER 2009**

**Panel:**

Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier (Chairman)  
Connétable G.F. Butcher of St. John  
Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour  
Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade

**Witnesses:**

Mr. M. Renouf (Area Youth Officer, Youth Service)  
Mr. R. Matthews (Head Teacher, d'Hautree House School)  
Mr. M. Lundy (Director of Education, Sport and Culture)

**Present:**

Professor P. Munn (Adviser)  
Ms. G. Bunting (Adviser)  
Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer)

**Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier (Chairman):**

For those of you who have not been here, and there are 2 of you have not, just a couple of things I have to draw your attention to. For the record for the transcript, in a moment I will get everyone to introduce themselves and once the panel have done that if you could, just so we officially know who you are. The other thing I have to draw your attention to is the statement on the desk there in front of you. The key part of that is that you are covered by privilege for anything that you say. The only problem area is if you stray into telling something deliberately that you know not to be true, which I am sure you are not going to anyway. The director will slap you around, I am sure, on the head if you do tell us anything that is not true. We do not have the BBC or Channel here, though I believe that they are coming, so do not be put off if they do arrive. So for the record I am Deputy Trevor Pitman, St. Helier No. 1. I am the chairman of this sub-panel which is a sub-panel of the Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel.

**Connétable G.F. Butcher of St. John:**

I am the Constable of St. John, Graeme Butcher.

**Ms. G. Bunting (Adviser):**

Gillian Bunting, former teacher and adviser.

**Ms. S. Power (Scrutiny Officer):**

Sam Power, Scrutiny Officer.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:**

Deputy Jeremy Maçon representative of Petite Longueville of the parish of St. Saviour.

**Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

I am Montfort Tadier, one of the Deputies from St. Brelade.

**Professor P. Munn (Adviser):**

I am Pamela Munn, Professor of Curriculum Research at the University of Edinburgh and an adviser to the panel.

**Mr. M. Renouf (Area Youth Officer, Youth Service):**

I am Mark Renouf, I am Area Youth Officer for the Youth Service and I am responsible for the west of the Island and part of the senior management team for the Youth Service.

**Mr. R. Matthews (Head Teacher, d'Hautree House School):**

I am Rob Matthews, I am the head teacher at d'Hautree House School.

**Mr. M. Lundy (Director of Education, Sport and Culture):**

Mario Lundy, Director of Education, Sport and Culture.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Thank you. Obviously we have 2 of you here essentially to interview and you are both from quite different areas so the panel will come in at various times with questions. We have 2 advisers and they are able to ask technical questions, so I am sure you are fine with that. So if I could just start with the Youth Service and perhaps ask, does the Youth Service have much contact with children who have been suspended from school?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

We have about 650 young people we contact every week. Some of those young people may well be suspended but they would be involved in our generic evening sessions. We would not generally know that they are suspended because that is not necessary for the work we do as youth workers unless they in person spoke to us. If they did we would speak to them in the same way that we would do with any other issue that they might raise. So, I guess the answer is we are bound to be contacting some young people that are suspended but we do not work with those people on the basis that they are suspended.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Okay. With centres being open at quite a variety of times, are you aware of any instances where young people who are suspended from schools have tried to access the centres for support?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

I am not aware of any; I am sure that probably happens. If it did, we would be working with that young person through the school, I guess.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Would that be recorded and if so how?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

Yes, it would. It is not something we currently keep figures on but I think that is because it would be fairly rare for us to be working outside of that system. The main work we do in schools is mostly around disengaged people from the mainstream curriculum, and those young people may or may not also be displaying challenging behaviour so will become pre-suspension in terms of our work.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Obviously you have a Youth Service representative, or you certainly did have a Youth Service representative, who sat on the Y.A.T. (Youth Action Team).

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

Yes.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Would that possibly paint a different picture from that person? I know it is difficult to answer because you are not that person but ...

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

Yes. I think we will probably cover quite a lot of that in question 4 which is around the preventative work that we tend to do. I do not know if you would like to talk through that now or if you want to leave it until question 4.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

No, we can.

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

In terms of the preventative work we tend to do, it is primarily preventative within schools. We run alternative programmes in conjunction with schools. We have representatives on the M.A.S.T.S. (Multi Agency Support Teams for Schools) within the 4 secondary schools and we are increasingly working with targeted groups of young people within school and outside of school. I do have a matrix which I can give you if the panel would like to have a look at it.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Absolutely, we are always keen to have a handout.

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

It details the positive work we have done within our schools over 2008 and 2009, so there should be enough for you. They are detailed there. There is: On 2 Wheels, preparation for employment, Q Gardens projects, enrichment groups, including activity week inputs. There is some one-to-one support but it is fairly limited; Prince's Trust excel programmes. It is a lot of information to take in for the panel at this point but I think it shows there is a Youth Service contribution to preventative work around suspensions in schools. We do have contact with the Youth Action Team. Those young people are not necessarily young people that are suspended. I do not know how they have come to the Y.A.T. team but we have done one-to-one work. There was a project this year with some high-profile offenders who are not at school in terms to re-engage them - that is quite time-consuming in terms of resources - but we do have contact with young people and the effort there is to get them back into mainstream education.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Would anyone like to comment on that point?

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Can I just ask you what experience you have had with dealing with youngsters that have been suspended and the reasons why they have been suspended?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

Yes, it is difficult for me to give comment on why they are suspended because obviously I am not a head teacher and not in a school, so I would have to leave that to head teacher colleagues. I did not catch the second part of the question, I am sorry.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Understanding your experience with the youngsters. It was more about the reasons for suspension than anything else.

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

Yes. I could not answer the reasons for it really because we are not party to that information and do not necessarily have to be in terms of the work we are doing. In relation to what experience we have, to be honest I could not really tell you whether they have been suspended or not, it is not an issue for us in that sense where we are inclusive in the sense that young people come voluntarily. So they are not referred so we do not really work with young people who are suspended because they are suspended.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Maybe if we turn the problem on its head slightly and we look at it from a different angle, what do you see as your role in the Youth Service as either picking up the early signs of behaviour that might lead to suspensions or preventing that kind of behaviour?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

I think that is difficult to answer because the head teacher has the right under the suspensions policy to suspend the young person for legitimate reasons. It is not something really I can give comment on because I ... But it is preventative, any role we take, but any young person around any issue or behaviour that they present to the Youth Service it would be about getting them to think about implications. Certainly, from an education point of view, we would be looking to try and get them back into mainstream education as soon as possible and as effectively as possible.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I guess what I am asking is, do you think the work that you do is useful in preventing suspensions happening in the first place?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

I think so, yes. We are continuing to work with young people. I guess that is going to be something you will probably have to direct to a head teacher directly because they are going to be more aware of the young people that are on the edges of suspension. From our perspective, they are young people that either present disengagement from curriculum or challenging behaviour, so I am not sure how close those young people are to suspension in reality.

**Professor P. Munn:**

Do you do any evaluation of your work either internally or commission any external evaluation?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

In terms of work with young people in schools?

**Professor P. Munn:**

Yes.

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

We are just having a schools review in terms of a schools' work policy but it is an increasing area that we are currently working in. We had an external review of the Youth Service generally in 2008 which was positive. The targeted work is something that we are also working on. We have a strategy that is about to go through to E.S.C. (Education, Sport and Culture) to look at, so yes is the answer.

**Professor P. Munn:**

Thank you.

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

I can give the documents relating to that at some point if you wish to have them as a panel.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I do not want to leave one of you sitting here for ages so maybe, Jeremy, if you want to pitch in with that. Sorry, could I just remind the media, as they have just arrived, that Deputy Tadier does not want to be photographed, so if you are taking snaps, focus on the sort of good-looking ones down this end of the table.

**Male Speaker:**

Is a black thing over your head all right?

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

No. Sorry about that, gentlemen.

**Male Speaker:**

Yes, fair enough.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

That is where we are. Deputy Maçon?

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

In your experience, why do you find people become suspended or get suspensions?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

It is because the head of the school, whoever is making the decision to suspend, feels that all other avenues have been exhausted, and the head has responsibility for the health and safety of the students and anyone else working in the school and also has responsibility for learning, and I think the feeling will be that things will come to a point where we, at that point, cannot proceed any further.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

How effective do you think suspension is on changing behaviour?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I think, on its own, it is a question that I would find very difficult to answer. Suspension on its own I think would probably not be a tactic that anyone would use. Suspension would be part of a range of strategies and it would be supporting a range of strategies and I would hope that most of them would be positive and the aim would be not to get to a situation where you are suspended. So, arguably, even if you do not use it, it may be a sanction that works but sometimes very difficult to prove whether it was the possibility of a suspension that improved things or whether it was any of the other strategies that you have used.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

We have heard quite a lot of evidence, certainly today and at other hearings, that there are a lot of children who get suspended through their behaviour but that their behaviour is part of autism, Asperger's, this sort of thing. Do you think there should be better facilities within the schools to cope with these problems, that it should not be something that should be punished?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I think it would be very complacent of me if I said that the way in which we are doing it now addresses all of these issues, but I feel very firm in this response in that I believe that we are constantly improving our techniques. Certainly within my school we are constantly adjusting things so that we take into account individual need. All schools have a policy for suspension. I have policies for almost everything that I do. Having a policy for everything could imply that you are very inflexible, but in my experience, as long as you constantly re-evaluate that policy in the light of experience, you begin to take into account all sorts of individual need.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

You have told us you are constantly adjusting or re-evaluating. Can you give us some examples of how you have been doing that?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Yes, we have a student council and we allow them to discuss policy. We allow them to introduce policy. We have a discussion lesson with each student during the week which is about the experiences over the week, and we have tried to make sure it is not a one-way process. It is not about: "You could have done that better, young man. You could have done this better." It is very much about: "How could we have helped you?" What we have within the department now is the solutions-orientated strategy which is all about making sure that we have got systems for learning from our mistakes, and I think we do.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

You talked about not wanting to be complacent and that there is always room for improvement. Can you give some maybe tangible examples?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I cannot give tangible examples, but I think it is very much along the line of the question that your colleague asked me in that are we taking into account all individual need. I think those are always areas where we can make improvement.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

Can I just clarify that the inference could be that there are no provisions in mainstream secondary schools for dealing with young people who have got special needs. There are 13 resource provisions across both primary and secondary schools.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

We are well aware of that. There was not an inference that there are not facilities. The inference is there might not be enough.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

Right, I understand, yes, but you have a list of all the facilities, the resource provisions?

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Yes.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I think some of the concerns of the panel may be that in spite of these provisions, there are still pupils, parents, who are slipping through the net somehow, and that is what we are here to try and find out.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Obviously you are going to see a lot of young people, perhaps from challenging backgrounds. Are you able to identify if those young people come to you on a consistent policy? Obviously I would imagine consistency is very much at the forefront of ensuring this all works properly.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Absolutely.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

And what sort of liaison do you have with the other schools?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

We have a protocol now whereby we make sure that the department is asking the question of the schools: "Have you tried everything that you possibly could have tried within your context before we think of transferring a student to d'Hautree House School?" It has very much moved from a system whereby schools used to show evidence that the relationship had broken down to a system now whereby schools show evidence to the fact that they have put in the support that was felt to be needed. So it is a more positive process, the process of transfer, but it is also more rigorous in that we make sure that we are looking at every possibility before there is any talk about transferring to d'Hautree House School. We are now looking also at means of ensuring that it is a less abrupt transfer as well so that we may not be talking in the future about transferring to d'Hautree House School for 5 days a week but we are looking at ways in which we could support students who, for example, might need to spend 2 or 3 mornings with us and then access the mainstream school for the rest of the time because, ideally, what the department wants and what I want is that we maintain students within the mainstream schools.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Anyone else? Pamela, you look like you wanted to ...

**Professor P. Munn:**

Yes, it was just to follow up that very point because that is a very laudable aim but you will be aware that that is reintegration into mainstream ...

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Absolutely, yes.

**Professor P. Munn:**

But you will be aware that there is a lot of research that shows that that is a very difficult thing to achieve.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

It is very difficult, yes.

**Professor P. Munn:**

I am just wondering if you have any information figures at your fingertips about how many people say that you have successfully reintegrated over the last year.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Over the last year, 2.

**Professor P. Munn:**

Two out of how many?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

It is difficult to say exactly what the rule has been over the year. It rises to a maximum of 25 and I think dropped this year, at its lowest point, to 18 or 19. So, for argument's sake, 2 out of 25, yes.

**Professor P. Munn:**

Thank you.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Sorry, can I just add a rider to that?

**Professor P. Munn:**

Yes, sure.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

One of the concerns that the department had which they have shared with me, a common concern, is that sometimes the transfer to d'Hautree House School is fairly late and we have had students who have had spectacular success over the last 2 years of their schooling, but obviously there gets to be a point where although it would be desirable to transfer a student back into mainstream school, for educational reasons it would be extremely difficult and would be putting a huge amount of pressure on that student that we would not want them to have. So if we look in terms of students who transfer to Highlands courses, and high quality Highlands courses, if we were to say that those are reintegration successes as well, then our figures would be much higher.

**Professor P. Munn:**

Right, that is interesting.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I have not got those at my fingertips, but I can certainly give you those.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Suspensions, we know, are treated as a last resort. What other avenues are used in schools prior to getting to that last resort?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

For me, the involvement of the parents is extremely important and we try to make sure that we are in discussion with parents and in fact, in my particular policy, we have a clause now where unless it was a really genuine matter of health and safety, we would not suspend, even if all the criteria had been met, if we had not involved the parents. So we would go back a step and make sure that parents are involved, but if I keep on the parental consultation thing for a second, what is important also is that you do not just contact parents when you are having what we would call a negative issue with a student. It is about having a dialogue that is usually positive and a relationship which will stand the difficult test of having to support their young person when times are hard.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

We have had evidence this morning, in fact, that parental contact is not as good as it could be. This is evidence that we have received this morning, that basically there is a phone call saying: "Come and collect your child." Would you have an answer to that?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I have to say that that is not an ideal situation. I would like to feel that if I were in a situation where I was saying: "Come and collect your child", it would be following a series of conversations where we



would try to make sure that did not happen.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

We have heard evidence that sometimes a parent has not had any contact; their child has just been at home sometimes and it is only a couple of days later the child will slip into conversation: “By the way, I am suspended” and the parent did not know at all, so there was no contact.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I will try to avoid a situation like that.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

We certainly do appreciate you can only talk from your experience at your school, so we do appreciate that. We do not suggest you can answer for other schools, but you are quite clear that is not your experience.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

No, you know, I talked earlier about learning from your mistakes. You cannot learn from mistakes unless you are prepared to admit mistakes. I occasionally feel that I am not particularly politically astute in the way that I do apologise to people if I have made a mistake, and I have done that to parents and I do it to students as well if I make a mistake because I feel it is the only way that I can learn. I feel that I have colleagues like that as well. We try to be as open as we possibly can because I think in that way we are much safer. My discussions with parents and my discussions with students are as honest as I can possibly make them.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Certainly my question was more of a general one.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Yes, sure.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

It was not directed at your school.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

No, I did not think it was, no.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

We have had a good response regarding your school this morning.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

One question that arises really from Constable Butcher’s, you talked about your policy and I know there is a new system involved too, but is it still a draft policy that is in place?

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

The policy essentially is not unchanged because the policy is more than a policy; it is in legislation in that the power of the head teacher to suspend is set out in legislation. It is guidance as to the expectations. So there has always been an expectation that parents would have information, there would be contact with the school, they would have the right of appeal et cetera. What we have recognised and what we said at the last Scrutiny hearing, we need to clarify those expectations for schools. So, in essence, the new documentation is around clarifying the guidance for schools as to what we would expect if we are going to demonstrate best practice as far as working with young people is concerned, as

far as managing suspensions and communication with parents.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

How would you respond to evidence again we have heard today of people who have really felt that there is no real right of appeal other than to appeal to the people that they are unhappy with, whether they are right or wrong?

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

That would be the first port of call always, and the first thing that you would do if you had a difficulty with the school is go straight to the school, and of course there has to be a graduated system after that. It may well be that parents have not clearly understood that, and the purpose of the guidance is to make sure that that is spelt out, in essence, for parents at the time of suspension, but the fact remains that the process has always been in place.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

Just to carry on, you talked about involving parents in an interview. Can you just comment on how effective you feel that is?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

If I talk about degrees of how effective it is, I would just use the adjective “extremely” effective. I think it is a 2-way process. There are occasions when we have been involved in things that possibly are not to do with the school but it is about shared concern and working together, and in my experience some of the students that I have and some of the young people that struggle most with life are those who have experienced inconsistency perhaps in the past, and it is very important that we are consistent within school but it is also very important that we are saying the same things as the parents are saying when they get home.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

You commented on parenting being a good avenue to follow. What other methods are available to the school other than issuing a suspension?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I think I said about how important it is to have a good relationship with the parents. It is extremely important to have a good relationship with the students so that we do not get into situations which are confrontational and experience behaviour which we are not able to talk to the student about. So, one of our prime concerns is to develop an extremely good relationship with the students. So I would say that was a strategy that would avoid a great deal of the issues which might give rise to suspension. We also have a cycle of review with each student so that we are able to pick up difficulties before they feel that they need to demonstrate them to us through behaviour that we may not be able to sustain. So there is no need to behave in any way that is unacceptable in order to get attention because the attention is given regardless. Again, also on that positive spin is that we try to make sure that attention is given for positive reasons. So we look towards success. We look to report success to parents and we look to make sure and we do audit our communications with parents to make sure that they are predominantly positive so they are predominantly positive. So we try to get into a virtuous cycle where we are not talking in terms of sanctions; we are talking in terms of reward and praise.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Can we bring it back to the previous question about how effective suspensions are in general? Obviously we do not expect you necessarily to be able to give an across-the-board answer to that, but you did say that you thought that suspensions were extremely effective.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

No, I did not.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Did you not?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I am sorry if I said that. I certainly did not mean that. In fact, I thought that I probably gave the opposite answer to that. I do not feel on their own they are going to be effective.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Right, okay.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I think they may be effective in supporting other strategies, but it would be difficult to demonstrate that it was the presence of the suspension necessarily that gave rise to success. So I do feel it is very much a last resort, and if ever I have to suspend, I have a feeling of failure.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

If a young person comes to you because they have been suspended from one of the other schools, if, after some time, you get the impression that possibly that it is not the right decision, perhaps they would be better off in another school, how does that work? How does that liaison then work?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

It does not quite happen like that any more. They would not come to me because they have been suspended from another school any more. It would be because, as I say, the protocol had been followed and that we had not managed to succeed with any of the huge range of strategies that we tried, but if somehow an error was made and a student arrived with me who should be back in the mainstream school, we would have set up a series of targets with that student. I mean, it is difficult to talk in a hypothetical situation because it would imply to some extent that relationship with the mainstream school had broken down. What we have now is a discussion with the mainstream school so that we know what learning that student needs to do in order to get back to the mainstream school. I do not mean in terms of learning in mathematics and English, but what social learning they might need to do to get back to the mainstream school. I feel it is my responsibility to make sure that that learning takes place but also to provide evidence that it has taken place. So if I had a student with me where it was patently evident that they should be back in the mainstream school, I would be putting a great deal of pressure on a mainstream school to take them back, and if I did feel that it was not going to be viable with that mainstream school, the educational psychologists would be helping me to look for an alternative placement. There are occasions when it is not desirable for a student to go back to a mainstream school, and that is often the student's own choice. They may feel they want a new start and we have been able to do that on occasions with students.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Is there any liaison with the youth service on supporting students?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Yes, and it is something that we have had and it something I am sure that, in a year or so when we are sitting before you again, I will be able to be more specific about it, but Mark and his colleagues and I, we have met on a few occasions in order to plan a more structured way of the youth service getting involved. There is a great willingness between the youth service and certainly my school and I think other schools to work together, and I think what we have to do now is to make sure that we have

structures to make sure that we work consistently together and not just on those occasions when we are looking around for last resorts because we know that the more professionals can get involved in order to support a student, the more effective it is.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

Could I just point out because I think we have tended to talk in terms of high-level strategies within schools and structures, but a lot of the stuff that makes a difference is the detailed work, so you say to us: "What structures have you got in place?" and we say: "We have got a nice team. We have got a behaviour support teacher. We have got access to a social worker and youth worker. It is the detail of what happens underneath those structures that makes the difference. So it is the role-play you might have with a youngster to help them deal with a difficult situation in a classroom. So that sort of stuff goes on. If you have got a class where a child is regularly confrontational, then it is likely that the behaviour support teacher will work with that child, that there would be role-play, that there would be targeted interventions, that the children themselves might have targets, and there is a culture of that across the secondary schools which I think probably we are taking for granted in giving you that information. So there is a lot of work that is done in that respect that I think we would like to probably get the most appropriate people to share with you which would be the behaviour support teachers themselves, the school counsellors. The structure is in place, but unless you understand the detail of the work that goes on underneath that structure which is about raising self-esteem, it is about helping children deal with confrontation, stress, some of the challenges that they face outside of school as well as the challenges they face inside the school; that is the detail of the work. That is the stuff that makes the difference.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

In light of what you have said, having heard the evidence today, what would your response be - I would assume it would be shock - to hear that a parent with a young person with Asperger's Syndrome has been just out of school for 7 weeks and the response from the head teacher when he is asked to help is: "As far as I am concerned, it is sorted" because that is what I have heard today?

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

I cannot respond to individual cases unless you tell me about the case. If you tell me about the cases, we can look into them and respond but I do not think it is necessary for a head teacher or myself to be asked to respond to an individual case without being able to research that. I would not be happy if a young person was out of school, for example, over 15 days in any one term without the appropriate arrangements being put in place. So if you have got an example of something that appears to be outside of our policy and regardless in any organisation, in any local authority where there are policies, there will also be times when people step outside those policies, then we would want to take that issue up, but that is not commonplace and it is certainly something that I am not aware of at this point in time. So if you have information to that effect, then I think we would very much like to have it.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

While I am sure you appreciate evidence is coming up all the time with makeshift power having to work with parents, a lot of that is in confidence but obviously we will be putting that information to you as much as we can.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

Yes, and that would be useful. It is very difficult to respond to either anonymous submissions or submissions that have been made in private.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

It is certainly not anonymous.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

No, but at the same time, if they are not made in an open and transparent way, it is very difficult to give them the same weight, but quite frankly, if that type of situation was happening, the Education Department would want to take it up because it is not in policy and it is not something that we would support.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

We could certainly expect that to be a one-off.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

I would not even expect that to be happening as a one-off, but I cannot comment on it because I do not know about it.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

Just a question, from evidence we have been given, when you have the issue of suspensions, usually what we have found, accompanies some disorder or Asperger's Syndrome or something like that. Let us say they reach your school; what way of diagnosis is available to students or how fast is the process from your end should you receive something?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I am not qualified to diagnose issues like that. I have got some experience just over the years. I may be able to, but it is not something I would feel confident to do, so we have educational psychologists for that purpose. The protocol that we are looking at is to make sure that the psychologist has been involved at an early stage so that when a student transfers to d'Hautree House he is not just transferring to be there for the rest of his education but he is transferring in order that we can work with him to help him. Some of the things you are describing we are not going to change but we can provide young people with strategies for managing those. We can also advise a mainstream school when the young person goes back as to how they might be able to help him, but in many cases I would be preaching to the converted because the mainstream schools, as we are, are well aware of the needs of young people with Asperger's Syndrome and many other of the examples of development issues that cause difficulty in education.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

Do you find that in your specific institution you might be diagnosing ...

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I would not be diagnosing anything.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

No, no, but the students you refer on to the relevant parties, when they get to you, you find that many are diagnosed with different issues or perhaps not so much?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

No, I think an awful lot of these issues, they are sometimes very difficult to diagnose and that is why it needs a very highly trained professional because there are degrees sometimes of the amount of which such issues affect people. So there is a range of people with Asperger's Syndrome. Some of them function extremely well in society and you would not know, and others really find almost every aspect of life extremely difficult, but we take advice from the psychologists, from any other relevant professional, so if we are looking at young people on the autistic spectrum, which is often an issue for me, we take advice from Autism Jersey, for instance, and we have recently audited a lot of our

procedures to make sure that we are not working against the way in which we need to work for people with some degree of autism. It is a constant learning process and we try to keep up with it. We try extremely hard to keep up, and if occasionally we or any other schools fall behind, it is not through a lack of willingness to keep up. It just happens from time to time.

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Can I ask do you have any ideas as to why there is quite a disparity of suspensions within various schools on the Island? I know we are talking 2 different things. We are talking behaviour and illness which causes behaviour. There is a double issue there, if you like, but there is quite a disparity if you look at the figures with some schools as opposed to others. I am not trying to lead you. Is it training? Is it ...

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I would be speaking almost as a layman here because I have not done an in-depth study of this, but I know certain things, and I know that some schools are bigger than others, for instance. So that, very simply, would be a reason why we might have a higher number of suspensions. We are also talking about a very small cohort of young people and, in the same way as youth crime figures can go up and down, we can have the suspension figures within one school affected very, very greatly by 2 or 3 young people. So it would be very difficult to give a definitive answer, but I think there is a huge variety of reasons and some will not be under the control of schools and possibly some are. We need to learn better how to address those.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

Can we just step back on a point? I do not know whether you are aware of it. You may have spoken to Autism Jersey, but there is a fairly close relationship between Autism Jersey and the education service where they are involved in training programmes and stuff.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Yes, they have been into d'Hautree House on 3 occasions now in the last year.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

We heard earlier from Autism Jersey that they have been and given S.P.E.L.L. (Structure, Positive (approaches and expectations), Empathy, Low arousal, Links) training to teachers.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Yes, yes.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Is that something that every teacher will see rolled out then, I suppose?

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

It would not necessarily be given to every teacher. It would initially be with teachers who are working, for example, in a resource provision or have a responsibility for a resource provision and then we would expect within the school even the head of special needs would probably also be involved in the training or whoever the lead teaching assistant was that was involved in the training to cascade the relevant information to all members of staff within their own training schedule to make sure that members of staff are aware of children who might be on the autistic spectrum and have a range of strategies that they can use or at least know where within the school they can get advice in order to be able to support individual youngsters. That would work hand in hand with what we would expect to be an education plan for a youngster like that within the school so staff would be aware that there is a child who requires this type of support and, as teachers, you need to be aware and take advice on your practice. Teaching

assistants would then be in the class, of course, to advise the teachers.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Just to clarify, with my school it is such a small school there was no need to cascade the training. It was possible for us to all have that training and it has made a difference.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Is there a requirement for S.P.E.L.L. to be rolled out into the appropriate areas of all the schools?

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

It is not a requirement as such. There is a requirement for training to be rolled out, and that is the programme of choice because we have been working with Autism Jersey on that, and certainly there is a requirement that that would be the case in schools that are resource provisioned.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I think there is a groundswell that is going to happen anyway. The staff in my school were so positive about the S.P.E.L.L. training that I know that they have spoken to colleagues in other schools and I feel it is something that is going to be rolled out almost by default because it is what people want and teachers want to succeed. So, means like that which enable them to succeed with the students they might not have succeeded with otherwise are extremely attractive to teachers.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Just to get on the record, if it is necessary to suspend a young person from your particular school, what is the next stage then after that?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

The aim would be to protect the relationship even in spite of the fact that there has been a suspension and we would have been working up until that point to make sure that the relationship was safe and the spirit would very much be that when a student returns to school we would have a meeting but to some extent it would be a welcome back process and we would make it clear that we wanted that student back within the school. It is something we have moved to over the last couple of years. It would be very much a dialogue then between the parents and the student and ourselves as to what we could do collectively to make sure that we did not get into a situation again where a suspension occurred and it would very much follow the lines of the solution-orientated approach that I described earlier where we are looking to see what we have done well in the past. We would be looking to find out from the student what he felt happy about within school and we would be looking to see if we could do more of that with him. In that sense, we are looking to make sure that there were not further suspensions.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

The point that Mr. Matthews has just touched on there is the solution-oriented strategy that we are trying to roll out across all schools, and all schools are engaged in this at the moment which essentially is about finding out what works and doing more of it, as opposed to focusing on the things that are the biggest challenges, trying to build up self-esteem and work through our problems by finding realistic solutions.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

If I could further clarify that, it is obvious when we say that we want to be positive and we want to look at solutions, that is almost something that I would say, would I not, but this is about a range of strategies to make sure that things are positive. It is about a way of conducting meetings, all sorts of transactions, where we make sure that we focus on the positive because I have had the experience in the past where I have wanted a meeting to be positive and I could not make it so, and this is a way of making sure that we protect our relationship with the students and that we are as optimistic as we can possibly be.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I did not want to portray you as a last-resort school and I do not mean it in that sense.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

And I do not want to be, no.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

No, but even you must get occasions when you have tried suspensions and that has not worked. What is the process for young people who you feel you cannot support?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I have to think back into the past a little bit. There have been occasions where I have felt I was being far less effective than I wanted to be. What is very important, as I said, is the relationship with the students and trying to maintain that. My experience is that, as young people grow older, they usually make a considerable improvement. Some of it will be because of their involvement with d'Hautree House but a lot of it is the maturation process. People do learn to manage their issues and sometimes it is quite remarkable how they do. So we try to make sure that we maintain a relationship with that student and that we keep them within the body of the school. I am trying to remember the last occasion I said to the department I was not managing. I cannot remember a situation. There have been occasions when the department has felt the need to step in to give me extra support, but it has been an extremely long time since I have felt that we were totally failing. There is usually a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel and I am getting better and better at focusing on that.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

The question is not a criticism of you.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

No, I did not think it was.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I assume that it must happen and I just wonder where a young person goes after that.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

It seldom happens, but it would be if there are needs that we felt we were unable to meet on our own, so there have been occasions where young people, very few occasions - I would need to get the data out for you - where a young person may have been placed in a specialist facility in the U.K. (United Kingdom). Maybe that is something to do with a mental health issue or some ...

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Now I have had time to think, there was an occasion some years ago, the last occasion, and it is very much along the scenario that Mr. Lundy is describing, but it is often in a situation like that we would not be just looking at a breakdown in the young person's performance in school. It certainly just would not affect school; it would affect all aspects of their lives. On that particular occasion, the fact that the young person no longer attended for a while was because there was issues in other parts of his life that were causing even more concern.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

How would parents be involved in that decision if the decision was that even d'Hautree House could no longer cope?



**Mr. M. Lundy:**

The special needs procedures would click in for multi-agency assessment. Parents would be involved in the process. I can provide you with that process but essentially they would form a part of the process and would be involved in the decision-making. Sometimes, of course, if you are talking about young people who have got to a point where things are falling apart dramatically in all 3 major areas of their lives, school, home and the community, sometimes the decision is taken away from the parents and the department and the child. So if you get a child that is placed in Greenfields, for example, the courts might make that decision and therefore it is a question of supporting that process and ensuring that the education continues, but if the decision is not taken away by the courts, it could be taken away, I suppose, by the courts in another way with a secure welfare order or something like that. If not taken away by the courts, then the parents would be fully engaged in the decision making process.

**Professor P. Munn:**

I was going to ask, Mr. Matthews, you have obviously got a wealth of expertise in managing behaviour, promoting positive behaviour I know you have been talking about, and dealing with negative behaviour. I was wondering if there are opportunities to share that expertise with other colleagues in mainstream schools in the Island.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Yes, I am involved in N.Q.T. (Newly Qualified Teachers) training with a senior psychologist, and the head of St. James also is involved with primary colleagues, and to some extent, in that particular scenario, what we are able to provide is experience and evidence to support the theory that the psychologist is presenting in that way to make the training more relevant to teachers. We are also, as I think I said earlier, trying to develop d'Hautree House's role so that it is not seen to be a place of last resort. I have always struggled against that idea that it might be seen in that way and so what I have been trying ...

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

We are certainly not trying to portray ...

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

No, I understand that. We are looking at different modes of attendance. What we would hope in years to come is that we would be helping to maintain young people in the mainstream schools so that that would involve an interchange of possibly staffing but certainly ideas between d'Hautree House and the mainstream schools. I do go into mainstream schools a great deal and I do not feel there are an awful lot of things I know that they do not know. I think it is just about making sure that knowledge is evenly spread, and I think to some extent we are at the sharp end so we learn very quickly and mainstream colleagues learn a bit slower because they are not constantly confronted with some of the challenges that we are confronted with and happy to meet.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Could I just jump back to the youth services? Youth service certainly used to play a big part in anti-bullying within schools. Do you see a link there with work towards cutting down suspensions maybe or preventing them in the first place?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

Possibly. I think there is a way to go. I think that has been acknowledged around the table, but in terms of the contributions that the youth service and the schools can make towards managing young people's behaviour, I think we are at the beginnings of that relationship developing. I think that is a really positive thing. Clearly we can always do more and the focus of the work we do is primarily preventative in getting people to think about what they do in terms of thoughts, actions. So yes, I would say

obviously there is some input there. The programme of work that you have got there does not really include any of the P.H.S.E. (Personal Health and Social Education) input that we have which will obviously deal with that kind of stuff. It does not include any assemblies or anything else that we do. So that is primary stuff just focused on pre-suspension stuff, but clearly there is a way to go in terms of developing that relationship which is positive at the moment but could obviously be more ...

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Obviously we will be making recommendations, publishing our findings. If I put you on the spot and said what could be given to the youth service to help you develop that work, I think you will say “money”.

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

Well, obviously if you get more resources you can do more positive stuff. That is not saying we are underfunded, but clearly if there is more resources in schools and in the youth service, we can do more positive work with more young people. I would never say no.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Are you underfunded?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

No, I would not say that.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Are you?

**Mr. M. Renouf:**

No. I repeat what I have just said really, that we can always do more positive work with more resources.

**Deputy J.M. Maçon:**

What key changes, if any, to the current policy on suspensions would you like to see, recommend, suggest, if any?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

I would have to say I would not be looking to changes in the suspension policy but I would be looking to a lot of the other things. I want us to be doing a lot of the other things I talked about earlier to make sure that we were not thinking about operating the policy, that we were not going down that route really, but the policy as it stands is one that I have used to form my own policy and it has been subject to solution-orientated thought in that it makes sure that as we go through the policy we are looking to accentuate the positive and to use other techniques. So it is very much a strategy for avoiding suspension as opposed to a strategy or a policy for organising a suspension.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Just for the record, could you just explain briefly solution-orientated policy? I think there is a danger as we all get the jargon ...

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

Yes, I know. I am sorry. Yes, I know, I know. It is a variety of techniques for making sure that we recognise our success in any given situation. I do not professionally come across situations where there has not been some degree of success and it is about learning from that success, about finding out from a young person, you know: “You always do [such and such] except on that particular occasion. Why did that not happen on that particular occasion?” If we can identify something that happened differently

there, we would look to use that in the future. The techniques ensure that you are constantly asking yourself the question: “Am I looking for the positive lesson in this I can take?” because otherwise we can become, as educators, in some cases pessimistic about the chance of success of a young person. In my experience, all of the young people that I deal with have capacities that will be surprising. They have the capability of succeeding in areas that you would not expect and we need to find those and we need to make sure that they understand how successful they are. So there is a variety of outcomes. One is that we make it positive but it also builds self-esteem, and many professionals feel that a lot of behaviour issues arise out of poor self-esteem. So if you can feed back to a young person that they are a success, then that often will reduce behaviour issues.

**Mr. M. Lundy:**

In a nutshell, it is a framework for school development and it can be applied at any level, at pupil level, but the important thing is that it should be applied at school level. So if a young person is not necessarily settling and behaving well within a school setting, I suppose old-style thinking might have been that there is something wrong; the child is not conforming. Modern thinking would be around: “Okay, well, what is going well in the school? Where are the lessons that this child is succeeding in? Why is he succeeding in these lessons, if it is a he. Is it to do with the teaching? Is it to do with the teacher? Is it to do with the subject? Let us look for more and build on the positive so the school, under a solution-oriented approach, would change what it was doing to try and provide a more individualised, personalised learning experience for the whole person; that is essentially what it is.

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

It is very rigorous though, it is not a, you know, vague idea.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

You have convinced me. You sound like you wanted to ...

**The Connétable of St. John:**

No, Jeremy finished mine, that last question.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

I think we need to finish with this one. I am conscious of the time. Is there anything that you particularly want to say to us that you feel you have missed or we have not asked you?

**Mr. R. Matthews:**

No, it is just that I am happy to have the dialogue and I think any context where we can broaden understanding, because my feeling is that, as teachers, we have a primary responsibility for education but learning in society is something that affects all of us; we are all involved in that and that is why we work with other services and I think that should be understood.

**Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Obviously we did say, and we repeat, we appreciate you cannot comment for other head teachers, you can only really talk about your own so, as the day progresses, we will learn more, I am sure, so can I just thank you all for coming. Thank you.